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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): WORK-PLUS.COM INC. [US/US]; 111 Founders Plaza, Suite 1802, East Hartford, CT 06108 (US).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): SHAW, Richard, C. [US/US]; 18 South Mill Drive, South Glastonbury, CT 06073 (US). BERUBE, Jon, M. [US/US]; 435 Foster Road, South Windsor, CT 06074 (US). PIANO, Louis,

S. [US/US]; 25 Ashley Street, Hartford, CT 06105 (US). CRAMPTON, Erwin, E., III [US/US]; 5 Erla Road, Merrimack, NH 03054 (US). CRAMPTON, Nathaniel [US/US]; 178 1/2 Kinsley Road, Nashua, NH 03060 (US). BARBER, Robert [US/US]; 30 Rise North Sun Drive, Hope, RI 02831 (US). RAMALHINO, Pam [US/US]; 17 St. Mary's Drive, Hudson, NH 03051 (US).

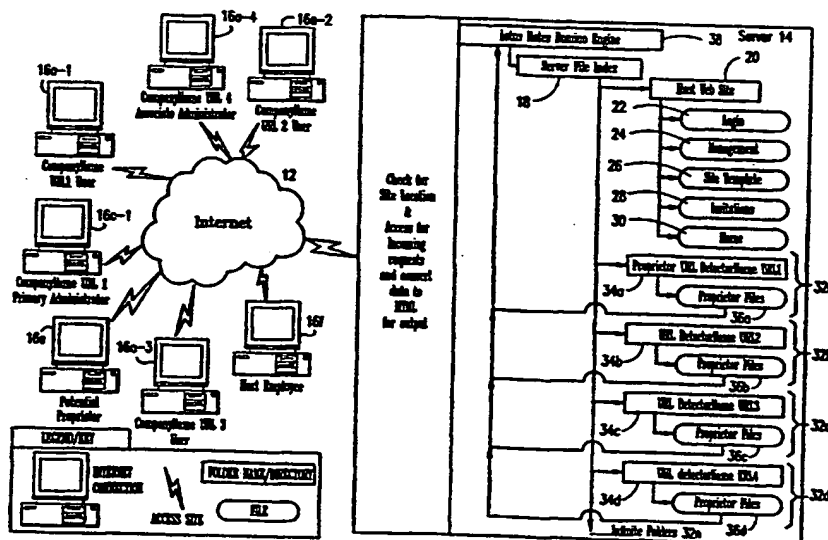
(74) Agents: GABLE, R., Lewis et al.; Cowan, Liebowitz & Latman, P.C., 35th Floor, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036 (US).

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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CREATING AND MANAGING CONTENT ON AN EXTRANET WITHOUT PROGRAMMING SKILLS



(57) Abstract: There is disclosed a server (14), which is adapted to communicate over a network (12) with each of an administrator (16a-4), a user (16a-1) and a host (16f) of the server. The server comprises a plurality of virgin web sites ready to be constructed; each web site has a file ready to be filed with content. The server further includes a controller, which is programmed to communicate separately with each of the administrator, the user and the host, to generate a distinct homepage upon the login of each of the administrator, the user and the host. The administrator's homepage comprises a set of links to construct and to load content to the file of the administrator's web site. The user's homepage comprises a link permitting the user access to the contents of the file of its web site. The host's homepage has a set of links to manage the server, and to keep track and to manage the server, and to keep track and to manage the use of the plurality of web sites.



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METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CREATING AND MANAGING CONTENT ON AN EXTRANET WITHOUT PROGRAMMING SKILLS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a comprehensive employee electronic communication system. More particularly, the communication system includes the tools for the employer to create an Internet web presence without technical programming assistance and post communications to the web presence that are accessible via the Internet. The system is easy to use by the employer and by the employees, without technical assistance. Employees have the ability to access the employer communications from any computer terminal that provides access to the Internet. The employee access is password and ID secured.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is customary for employers to communicate information to employees in hardcopy form or orally. These communications can be in the form of manuals, procedures etc in three ring binders, single page announcements, voice mail messages, and group and one to one meetings. In addition, employers maintain and staff Human Resource departments to not only produce, but also to print, collate and distribute the hardcopy communications. The employer must rely upon many people in a chain to attempt to have current information available and communicated to all of its employees. Of course, the employer really has little assurance that all hardcopy manuals are actually updated, that all employees receive a current communiqué, that all information is available to all employees, and that all employees have equal access to events calendars or job postings. Furthermore, employee access to employer information is restricted to on premises access. Although it may be the case that employees are permitted to bring manuals and other documents to their homes, it is unlikely that they will anticipate the need for the information that they or their families may wish to access.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a method of using a server to construct on an undivided memory a plurality of web sites. Each of these web sites is related to an administrator. The method comprises the steps of creating a template with a set of operations that will facilitate each of the plurality of administrators to construct and input content into its related web site, and of then responding to an administrator's logging on to the server, to initiate a process of constructing a web site. This process includes the steps of allocating a portion of the undivided memory to form a file for receiving site content, and of refreshing from the template the set of operations into the web site file, whereby each web site has its own set of operations to construct and input content into its file.

In a further aspect of this invention, a server is adapted to communicate over a network with network sites connected thereto. The network sites operate in a language adapted for transmission over the network and used by the network sites. The server of this invention includes a memory comprising a plurality of files. The plurality of sites formed on the server. Each of the plurality of sites comprises one of the files, said plurality of files are filled with content written in a native language other than the network adapted language. The server further includes an engine for converting the native language into the network adapted language, and a controller responsive to a request from one of the network sites for the content of one of the server sites to download from the server site its content in its native language to the engine, whereby the engine converts the downloaded native language of the one server site into the network adapted language for transmission over the internet to the requesting network site.

In a still further aspect of this invention, a server is adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators. The server comprises a memory comprising a plurality of files, and a plurality of sites formed on the server. Each of the plurality of sites comprises one of the plurality of files. Each file of a server site stores a set of operations that an administrator related to the one site may use to construct its site and to input data into the site's file at the discretion of the related administrator.

In another aspect of this invention, there is described a method of operating a server to preassign a plurality of web sites to a plurality of prospects. The server includes a memory on which a plurality of the web sites may be constructed. The method comprises the steps of developing a list of prospects for a web site, providing to each of the prospects an indication that a web site has been assigned to the prospect, notifying the prospects that a web site has been preassigned to them and that each prospect has been assigned an indication. At least one prospect logs on to the server and inputs its indication thereto, whereby the server responds to the prospect's logging onto the server and the prospect's indication to construct on the memory a web site for the prospect.

In another embodiment of this invention, a server is adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators and a plurality of users. The server comprises a plurality of virgin sites ready to be generated and loaded with content, and a controller for receiving communications from each of the plurality of administrators and the plurality of users. Each of the plurality of web sites has a file for receiving content. Further, the server is programmed with a set of operations for constructing and loading each of the virgin sites. The controller permissions one of the plurality of administrators to access the set operations, whereby the administrator can construct and load with content a related site at the discretion of the permissioned administrator. The controller is responsive to a communication of a user to permission that user to only access and view the content loaded into the user's related web site.

In a further aspect of this invention, a method is described for adapting a server to permission users to access at least one web site, the one web site having a content file. The method comprises the steps of constructing and filling the content file of the web site with content, permissioning an administrator to control the access to the one web site by uploading the names of permissioned users
5 in a user file, permissioning a user to gain access to the one web site and to view its content by matching the name of the user with a name in the user file.

This invention also contemplates a method of facilitating a host to manage a plurality of web sites. Each of the plurality of web sites includes a file. The method comprises the steps of creating a master template with a set of operations for constructing and loading content to each file of the
10 plurality of web sites, the host giving instructions to the master template to determine the set of operations, and repetitively refreshing each file of the web sites with the set of operations from the master template, whereby the construction and loading of content to each web site is controlled by the host.

In a still further aspect of this invention, a server is adapted to communicate over a network
15 with each of an administrator, a user and a host of the server. The server comprises a plurality of virgin web sites ready to be constructed; each web site has a file ready to be filed with content. The server further includes a controller, which is programmed to communicate separately with each of the administrator, the user and the host, to generate a distinct homepage for each of the administrator, the user and the host upon the login of each. The administrator's homepage comprises a set of links to
20 construct and to load content to the file of the administrator's web site. The user's homepage comprises a link permitting the user to access the contents of the file of its website. The host's homepage has a set of links to manage the server, and to keep track and to manage the use of the plurality of web sites.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

25 Figure 1 is a functional block diagram of a web site creating and management system in accordance with the teaching of this invention;

Figure 2 is a screen displaying a web site homepage at which an administrator can login to the system or can have a trial of the system;

Figure 3 represents the process by which the administrator take a trial of the system;

30 Figures 4A, B, C and D represent respectively the login process by which the administrator logs in to the published web site, a screen presenting the homepage of the proprietor web site, a process for automatically composing the proprietor homepage, and a process for using a master template to create and update a set of operations loaded into each of the web sites;

Figure 5 is a screen that presents a control panel of tools be used by the administrator to construct and load the web site with content;

Figures 6 - 9 represent the process by which the administrators use the tools of the control panel shown in Figure 5 to construct and load a proprietor's web site with content;

5 Figure 10 is a screen that shows the homepage of the server management system; and

Figures 11 - 15 represent the process by which the host or its employees manage the server to allocate the proprietor's web sites embedded in the server and to keep track and manage their use of the web sites.

DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

10 Referring now to the drawings and, in particular, to Figure 1, there is shown a web site creation and management system 10, which use a network, i.e., an Internet 12 in one illustrative embodiment of this invention, to facilitate communication by the various participants who use and/or interact this system, namely site proprietors, users, sponsors and a server host and its employees, as will be explained below. Generally, the server host or its employees secure and program the server 14
15 to create on the server 14 a plurality of web sites. Typically, the server host markets and allocates these ready to be loaded or programmed with content web sites to prospective proprietors. In turn, the proprietor loads its web site with its content and, further, authorizes certain users to access and view the proprietor's content. Other participants to the system 10 include a primary administrator and an associate administrator. As will be explained below, the site proprietor can designate a primary
20 administrator with the authority to program the web site of its proprietor's web site with content and, further, to designate one or more associate administrators with limited authority to only load the web site with content.

The process of the host's marketing these web sites to prospective proprietors, the proprietors' acquiring the use of a web site on the server 14, the users' accessing and viewing of it proprietor's site
25 content, and the primary and associate administrators to load or program content on to its proprietor's web site, use the Internet 12 to facilitate communication between the prospective and site proprietors, the users and the primary and associate administrators, and the server 14. In particular, each prospective proprietor has a terminal 16e, the site proprietors terminals 16a-1 and 16a-2, each primary administrator a terminal 16c-1, each associate administrator a terminal 16d-4, each user a terminal
30 16b-3, and each host employee a terminal 16f.

The server 14 has a host web site 20 with a root URL. The host web site 20 has a plurality of application programs 22 - 30, which effect the creation and content loading of each of the proprietors' web sites and permits the server host to manage the server 14 and the web sites allocated to the site proprietors, as will be explained below. These web site application programs include the login

application program, the management application program 24, the site template application program 26, the invitations management application program 28 and the home page management application program 30.

Though not separately shown in Figure 1, the applications programs are stored on a hard disc memory of the server 14. The hard disc of the server 14 is further subdivided into a number folders 32a - n, one folder for each of the proprietor web sites to be implemented by the server 14. In particular, each folder 32 includes a set of proprietor files 36, which stores the content input by site's proprietor or its primary or associate administrator, and a web site URL detector 34. In addition to the root URL assigned to the host's web site 20 of the server 14, a nested URL unique to each proprietor and its web site is also assigned to each of the folders 32a - n to permit site content to be transmitted to a particular folder 32.

Each of the prospective proprietors, site proprietors, users, primary administrators, associate administrators and host employees may communicate with the server 14 by entering the root and the nested URLs into a browser of its terminal 16, whereby a message will be transmitted from that terminal 16 over the internet 12 to the server 14 and, in particular, to its host or main web site 20. The host web site 20 is coupled to its Login application file 22, which stores both the root URL of the site 20 and nested URLs for each of the folders 32. If the root URL and the nested URL attached to the message transmitted from one of the administrator terminals 16d-4 and 16c-1, or from one of the user terminal 16a-2 match the root URL and the nested URL retained in the login application file 22, the message will be transmitted to that folder 32 identified by the corresponding nested URL.

The management file 24 also stores a nested URL indicative of the file's address and the programming associated with the management of the server 14 by the host and its employees. Thus, a message from the host employee terminal 16f with the root URL of the host web site 20 and the nested URL of the Management file attached thereto, will be directed by the Login file 22 to the Management file 24 to initiate a management function as will be described below.

The server 14 illustratively takes the form of an IBM NetFinity 5000 server, which utilizes Microsoft NT as its operating system and Lotus Domino as its web server. Illustratively, the server 14 is dependent upon both the Notes formula language and LotusScript for its functionality, and Domino for its migration to the Internet 12. It is contemplated that the server 14 could be built and programmed with other hardware or software. In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the server 14 is implemented with a contemporary browser that is programmed with JavaScript for accessing the server 14. Each set of proprietor files 32 is implemented in one illustrative embodiment of this invention by a separate Lotus Notes database, which stores the proprietor content in the form of design elements including forms, views, agents, script libraries, navigators, subforms and documents.

All design elements are connected to converse with each other, as well as with the other databases within the application using both LotusScript and the Notes formula language.

The HTML files, that are ultimately transmitted to and from system participants, are created dynamically by a Lotus Domino engine 38. As shown in Figure 1, the engine is included within the server 14, and is interconnected with the proprietor file index 20, the folders 32, the URL detectors 34 and the proprietor files 36 to permit bidirectional flows of data to and from the server 14. HTML files from the participant's terminals 16 are transmitted over the Internet 12 to the server 24 and, in particular, to the engine where the HTML files are converted into LotusScript, in this example, and then directed to one of the URL detectors 34. A return signal, initially in LotusScript, is sent from the proprietor file 36 directly to the engine 38, which dynamically translates it into HTML, before sending it to one of the terminals 16. In particular, the engine 38 receives the data from the proprietor's file 36 and dynamically converts it into HTML for viewing on the browser of one of the participant's terminal 16. Specifically, the software allows the design elements described above, as well as the content files the proprietor may have stored with the proprietors' folders to be converted on the fly into HTML. It is appreciated that site content stored in the proprietor files 36 may be written in any of the well known languages, e.g., LotusScript, adobe, excel, word, word perfect etc. This engine 38 dynamically converts the site content, which is written in any of these languages, into HTML for transmission over the Internet 12 to one of the participants' terminals 16.

After each proprietor web site has been fully programmed and its content loaded into its set of proprietor files 32, that web site is given its own address or nested URL within the server domain, as well as its own distinct directory of the database kept in its proprietor files 36; in turn, this directory is kept within the proprietor file 18 to facilitate the transmission of messages to the addressed folder 32. In addition to having its own directory, as well as its own URL within the server domain, each published web site has its own unique security in terms of which user or administrator will gain access to a particular folder 32 and the site content stored in its proprietor files 36.

This invention permits one of the site proprietors to use a web site and to load the set of proprietor files 36 associated with its web site with that content the proprietor wishes to communicate with a selected population of users, without the need to obtain a server, to program it with that software necessary to create a web site, or to maintain the server and its software. For example, the site proprietor could be an employer, who wishes to communicate with its employees, i.e., the users in the context of this example. In this example, the web site content could be information about benefits offered by the employer for its users, company policy, job offerings or news, i.e., any information that the employer would need to share with its employees. More particularly, the invention is a process by which the site proprietors can utilize this invention to create a web site without the need of obtaining and programming a server in order to communicate with its users via the Internet. The process pursued by a prospective proprietor involves receiving the permission of the host of the server 14 to

use one of the plurality of web sites, which the host has established on its server 14 and manages as will be explained. In other words, the site proprietor nests a site on the root site or URL of the host's server 14. All site proprietors will nest a site on the same root URL.

5 This invention provides the programming for the creation of the web site for the site proprietor, whereby the site proprietor controls the site content, can change the content as frequently as desired and has control over the population of users who can access and view the proprietor's web site. Illustratively, the proprietor uses passwords and IDs to control which users have access to its web site. By contrast, the server host maintains and manages the web sites on its server 14. Further, neither of the users nor the server host can change the web site content. In particular, only the site
10 proprietor or one designated by the proprietor, i.e., a primary or associate administrator, can change the web site content.

Further, this invention also provides tools to the server host for managing the invention in the form of the management application program 24, including allocating web sites at the host's discretion to selected site proprietors, creating and modifying pricing structures for the use of these sites by the
15 site proprietors, modifying the layout of the corresponding menus of the assigned web sites, and providing general system maintenance to the sites and the server 14.

If the viewer has already registered, the viewer could choose to login and will be prompted for their user ID and password. Once logged in, they will be taken to a homepage 40 of their proprietor's site, as shown in Figure 3B. The administrators of the site can click on a "Control Panel"
20 link 41, which brings them into their site's "Control Panel" screen 300, as shown in Figure 5. As will be described in detail below, the "Control Panel" link 41 appears on a header 42a of the homepage 40. The "Control Panel" 300 is the tool used by the administrators to manage both the content and the list of users who can access and view a particular proprietor site.

Referring now to Figure 2, a primary or associate administrator or a user transmits in a
25 process 44 a request to the server 14. Initially in step 43, one of the above named participants inputs the root URL of the host's or main web site 20 of the server 14 into the browser of the participant's terminal 16 (Figure 1). In step 45, the URL borne by the message will first be compared to the URLs or addresses maintained in the proprietor file index 20 (Figure 1) and, if there is match between the root URL borne by the message and that retained in the index 20, the Login application program 22 of
30 the host web site 20 will be invoked and a home page 47 of the main or host web site 20 as illustrated in Figure 2 will be displayed on the terminal 16 of the participant sending this message. As shown in Figure 2, the web site home page 47 displays the following three links: 1) "Request for Free Trial" 48, 2) "User Login" 50 and 3) "Demo Site" to prompt the participant to initiate one of the two suggested actions for continuation of the session. The first link "Free Trial" 48 invites a prospective proprietor to
35 request a free trial of proprietor web site. The second hyperlink "User Login" 48 is addressed to

registered users and provides the opportunity to login. The third hyperlink "Demo Site" 49 invites a user to view one of a set of demonstration sites. The participant's clicking on link 48 bring the participant to step 51 of Figure 3. Clicking on the "Login" link 50 will bring the participant to step 140 of Figure 4a. Upon clicking on the "Demo Site" link 49, a screen displaying the various types of demonstration sites is presented to the participant, who then chooses which site to access and view. The web site home page 47 may also include in an illustrative embodiment of this invention links (not shown) to the various applicable policies, terms of use, user care, email response capability and other information about the proprietor sites.

Figure 3 shows the process of permitting a prospective proprietor to view a free trial, whereby the prospective proprietor can access, view and load content into the host web site 20 implemented on the server 14 for a limited period of time. When the prospective participant clicks on the "Request for Free Trial" link 48 (Figure 2), the program moves to the process 53 as shown in Figure 3, wherein a form is displayed in step 51 that requests the prospective proprietor to input the required information needed for a trial of the proprietor site, e.g., its name, the URL of its home site, and the name, initial ID, pass word and the e mail address of the proprietor's primary administrator. After the prospective proprietor has input the required information, the prospective proprietor clicks on the "Send" button in step 60 to transmit the required information to the host server 14. Next, step 70 displays a Thank You message in appreciation of the proprietor's input of the required information. The prospective proprietor user can click in step 80 on "home" to again display in step 90 the host's home page 47 shown in Figure 2. Also when the prospective proprietor clicks on "Send" in step 60, an email notification is generated and the request for a free trial site is also transmitted in step 100 to the management file 24, whereby a site is created, as will be described below in Figure 10, and a record of the trial site, the proprietor and related information is stored in step 110 in the server 14. Then an email is generated and transmitted in step 120 to notify the prospective proprietor that the site has been created and is now ready to be utilized and filled with content by the prospective proprietor.

Figure 4A shows the login process by a user or by a primary or associate administrator. If as shown in Figure 2 one of these participants clicked on the "Administrator/User Login" link 50, the program moves to step 140, wherein the participant is prompted to input its ID and password. In step 150, the participant's ID and password are compared with the IDs and passwords which are retained in the proprietor file index 18 (Figure 1). If step 150 determined that the participant is a user, then step 180 determines whether the user's name and password are associated with a site that is published, and further whether the user's name and pass word belongs to a primary or associate administrator or to a user. If step 150 determines that the participant's ID and password are associated with an administrator, then step 160 determines whether this is the first time that the administrator has logged in and the site is not published. Then step 170, based on the administrator's ID and password, retrieves and uses the preliminary site information to create the general layout of the proprietor's web

site. The detailed steps of the process carried out in step 170 to create the proprietor's web site are described in detail below with respect to Figure 4B. When the proprietor's web site has been constructed in step 170, the completed proprietor's site is published in step 180, its homepage 40, as shown in Figure 3B, is displayed and the administrator can now click on in step 190 to access the "Control Panel" 300 as shown in Figure 5.

Referring now to Figure 4C, the process of generating the proprietor's web site will now be described. This process is completely automated and builds the site based on the information found with the invitation document. Process 170 starts when the primary administrator logs in in step 160. Next, step 174 creates the header portion 42a of the proprietor homepage 40 (Figure 4B) by accessing the preliminary site information entered in step 110 by the prospective proprietor into the management file 24 (Figure 1) and, in particular, the name of the proprietor, and by finally inserting the proprietor's name into the header portion 42a. Then, step 176 creates the introduction portion 42d by accessing the invitation, which is stored in the invitation file 26 (Figure 1). A host employee creates the invitation from information supplied from the sponsor, e.g., an introductory text and/or image supplied by the sponsor. Next, step 182 supplies links to the host's statements on copyright, privacy and terms of site use; these links and information are standard for the footer portions 42g of all of the proprietor homepages 40. Similar to step 178, step 184 accesses the invitation retained in the invitations file 26 and, in particular, the menus to be inserted into the portions 42b and c on the right hand side of the proprietor's homepage 40 (Figure 4B). In step 186, the site has been generated and is ready to be utilized.

The proprietor homepage 40 and its portions can be modified and customized by an administrator's use of the control panel 300, as will be below with respect to Figure 5.

If the participant is a user as determined in step 150, the user is permitted to access and view a particular proprietor's web site. Note from the configuration of steps 150, 160, 170 and 180, that only the administrator but not the user is permitted to create in step 170 a web site.

After the administrator has clicked in step 190 on the "Control Panel" option, the process checks in step 200 as to whether the site associated the administrator's proprietor has been registered. If not as determined in step 200, a registration form is displayed in step 240, whereby the administrator can input the appropriate registration information. Next, step 210 determines whether the host's site agreement, which spells out the terms under which the proprietor may use its site, has been previously approved by the proprietor's administrator. (The administrator must complete the site registration and accept the site agreement to register users.) If step 210 determines that the agreement has not been accepted or if the administrator has elected to continue in step 250 after the site had been registered in step 240, the process displays in step 260 the host's site agreement to the administrator. If as determined in step 270, the administrator declines to accept the agreement, the administrator

gains access in step 230 to the control panel 300 as shown in Figure 4C. If the administrator accepts the agreement as indicated in step 270 or the step 210 indicates that the agreement was previously accepted, then the step 220 determines whether the administrator was previously given the opportunity to replace the originally given, default password and ID to identify the proprietor's site. If not, step 280 provides the administrator a form upon which the administrator can enter a new password and ID. After either step 220 determines that the administrator has been given the opportunity to change its password and ID or a new password and ID was entered in step 280 and the administrator has elected in step 290 to continue, step 230 takes the administrator to the control panel 300 as shown in Figure 5.

Referring now to Figure 4D, there is explained the use of a master template, which is stored in the template application file 26, as shown in Figure 1. The master template includes a set of operations or "tools" for constructing each web site and uploading content to its proprietor file 36 (Figure 1). These operations are originally set and may be revised by a host employee. As will be explained below, the master template is refreshed by uploading a copy thereof to one or more of the web sites, as identified by their folders 32. As shown in Figure 4D, the refreshing is triggered by any of three events 238, 242 or 244. The triggers 238 and 244 are automated, and the third trigger 242 is a manual process which is invoked by a host employee. The first automated trigger 238 occurs when an administrator of a prospective proprietor logs into the host web site 20 for the first time as detected in step 160 (Figure 4A) as explained above. This initial login effects, among numerous other actions, a proprietor file to be created in step 170 by downloading a copy of the master template retained in the host's site template file 26. In this instance, only a single proprietor site's set of operations is refreshed. In particular, step 246 causes a copy of the master template retained in the master template application file 26 to be downloaded to a particular web site and its folder 34x that has been assigned to the prospective proprietor of the administrator. The second automatic trigger is effected on a regular basis, e.g., once each evening, and refreshes the set of orders of all of the proprietor files as represented by the folders 34a - n (Figure 4A). In particular, step 250 refreshes each of the proprietor sites, as identified by their folders 34a - n. It will be appreciated that the use of the master template permits an efficient and on-going control by a host employee the operations to construct and load content to the web sites. This use of the master template allows a host employee to automate rollout of new sets of tools for use by administrators, bug fixes and other programmatic changes, to all sites on a scheduled basis without the manual intervention of a host employee. The third trigger is a manual process and is fired by a host employee requesting in step 248 a refresh of the set of operations for one in step 246 or many in step 250 of the proprietor's sites. This method allows for immediate changes, of the same type as described above, in all necessary proprietor sites.

Figure 5 is a diagram that represents the control panel 300 of each of the proprietor's site. As shown in Figure 3B, the data representative of the control panel 300, as well as the programming tools

shown in Figures 6 - 9, which is used by the administrator to compose and load content into each of the proprietor's site, is replicated for and included within each of the folders 32a - n. The control panel 300 is accessible only available to administrators (and not users). After gaining access to the control panel 300 in step 230 (Figure 4), the administrator has several choices of links for the purpose of changing or inputting content to its proprietor's site. Step 301 represents the action of clicking on one of the links. Link 300a brings the primary or associate administrator to step 310 as shown in Figure 6. Link 300b brings the administrator to step 350 as shown in Figure 6. Link 300c brings the administrator to step 390 as shown in Figure 6. Link 300d brings the administrator to step 430 as shown in Figure 7. Link 300e brings the administrator to step 580 as shown in Figure 7. Link 300f brings the administrator to step 620 as shown in Figure 8. Link 300g brings the administrator to step 730 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300h brings the administrator to step 760 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300i brings the administrator to step 790 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300j brings the administrator to step 840 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300k brings the administrator to step 880 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300l brings the administrator to step 900 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300m brings the administrator to step 920 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300n brings the administrator to step 940 as shown in Figure 9.

Figures 6 and 7 show the process by which the primary or associate administrator creates the proprietor's homepage 40 of the proprietor's web site, as shown in Figure 4B. In particular, the proprietor's homepage 40 comprises seven sections 42a - g. The portion 40a is a header and is disposed at the top of the homepage 40 and bears the company logo, name or optional slogan, as well as the control panel link 41 to facilitate access to the control panel 300 as shown in Figure 5. The portion 42d is an introduction and is disposed in the center of the homepage 40 and tells the users about the proprietor's site. The portion 42g is a footer and is disposed at the bottom of the home page 40 to present the copyright notice, link to privacy and the terms under which the user or administrator is permitted access to view the proprietor's site. The left hand side of the proprietor's homepage 40 comprises portions 42e and f, and relate to the content that the proprietor wishes to distribute to its users. The portion 42e is disposed in the upper left portion of the homepage 40 and is illustratively a menu of various topics of the proprietor's content with links to each listed topic. The proprietor's administrator may select and/or edit these topics as will be described below with respect to Figure 7 (link 4d). The portion 42f is disposed on the lower left hand side and displays a menu of links to service or product providers. The proprietor's administrator may change and/or add to these links (URLs) as will be described below with respect to Figure 4 (link 4d). In the context where the user is an employee of the proprietor/employer, the portion 42e may display various employer related topics, e.g., employer announcements, benefit and policy manuals, documents, job openings etc. In this illustrative context, portion 42f may display a menu of links to the employee benefit providers.

The right hand side of the proprietor's home page 40 includes portions 42b and c as shown in Figure 4B, which relate to some aspect of another participant in the system and apparatus of this invention, namely a sponsor. In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the sponsor uses the proprietor's homepage 40 to promote the sponsor's services and/or products. In an illustrative embodiment, the sponsor could be a financial institution and the portion 42b would display a menu of financial services offered by this sponsor and links to other web sites describing such services. Portion 42c would display a menu of related services associated to the sponsor and corresponding links to information thereon. The sponsor menus may be edited by the host or the employees of the host (but not the proprietor's administrators) as will be explained below with respect to Figure 12 (link 5r).

The content of the sponsor menus is in turn set by messages, termed "invitations, which are transmitted by the sponsor to the server 14, wherein they are stored in the invitations file 28 (Figure 1) and may be accessed and viewed as will be described below with respect to Figure 14 (link 5t). The sponsors benefit from the system of this invention in that sites created for the proprietors will have embedded therein links, that will facilitate the site's users to link to sponsor sites which not only provide such users information about the sponsor's services and/or products but enable them to purchase or license them. It is contemplated that the sponsors will compensate the server host for embedding the sponsor's links into the proprietor's web sites.

In addition, the sponsors may identify a number of prospective proprietors, illustratively customers/clients of the sponsor, to the server host. The host in turn may communicate with the sponsor's prospective proprietors, providing them with the URL of the main or server homepage, data identifying the sponsor that proposed this prospect, e.g., an invitation number, and an ID and password for a preassigned site at the server 14 for that prospective proprietor. In this fashion, the sponsor's prospect may quickly login into the server 14 and have immediate access to its site for a free trial. Since the server 14 retains the sponsor ID for a particular prospective proprietor, the invitation's file can keep track of the use of that proprietor's site and the revenue derived from such use may be shared between the proposing sponsor and the server host.

Illustratively, the sponsor may use an information number to identify each of the prospective proprietors to which the sponsor would like to promote its services and/or products as explained above. Initially, the sponsor develops a list prospects. Then the host assigns an invitation number to each of the listed sponsor's prospects and creates a preassigned site for each of the sponsor's prospects. The host retains that list of invitation numbers in its server 14 and provides that list of invitation numbers to the sponsor. In turn, the sponsor communicates, e.g., sends a letter, E-mail etc., with one of the assigned invitation numbers to each of its prospects. In turn, the prospect may request a free trial by logging in to the server's homepage 44 as explained above with respect to Figure 2 and, further, may provide the homepage 44 with its invitation number. In turn, the server homepage

matches that invitation number with its retained number, whereby the fees and other conditions under which the prospect uses its proprietor web site will be set by agreement between the host and the sponsor.

As will be described below, the server 14 checks the invitation document (Figure 9, link 5i) for the menu options that will appear on the proprietor's homepage 40. The topics and content for the right side menus are determined by the menu name (Figure 9, link 5r) found within the invitation document (Figure 9, link 5i) and are not editable by the site users. The right side menu (Figure 9, link 5r) displays a predetermined list of links to sponsor products and services.

Referring now to Figure 6, when the administrator clicks in step 310 on link 300a (shown on the control panel 300(Figure 5)), a page is displayed in step 320 to enable the administrator to input an image or both text and image for the header portion 42a of the site's homepage 40 (Figure 3B). Once the administrator clicks on "Save" in step 330, these changes are published to the site and the administrator is returned in step 340 to the site's control panel 300 (Figure 5), whereat the administrator is provided with the opportunity to utilize the tools provided by the control panel 300.

When the administrator clicks in step 350 on the link 300b (Figure 5), a page is displayed in step 360 that allows the administrator to input text or an image with both text and image for the introduction portion 42d of the site homepage 40 (Figure 4B). After the administrator clicks in step 370 on "Publish", the administrator is returned in step 380 to the site control panel 300 (Figure 5), where at the administrator is given a further opportunity to utilize the control panel 300.

When the administrator clicks in step 390 on the link 300c (Figure 5), a page is presented in step 400 to the administrator that allows the administrator to input information and links for the footer portion 42g of the site homepage 40 (Figure 4B). When the administrator has clicked in step 410 on "Save", the administrator is taken in step 420. In step 420, the site control panel 300 (Figure 5) to permit the administrator to utilize the control panel 300 (Figure 5).

Referring now to Figure 7, when the administrator clicks in step 430 on the link 300d (Figure 5), a page is displayed in step 440 that allows the administrator to choice whether to revise the proprietor's menu topics which appear in the portion 42e of the site home page 40 (Figure 3B) or to select new topics. Next the administrator makes a choice in step 450. If the menu topics are to be revised, the administrator is taken to step 460, where the administrator is allowed to edit the topic menu names. Once the administrator clicks on "Save" in step 470, the administrator is returned to step 440 to continue to change the topic menu 40. In step 440, the user is again taken to the page that allows the choice of changing company info topics menu or content. If the administrator has now chosen in step 450 to select a new topic, the administrator is presented in step 480 with a page that allows the administrator to make one of the following choices: 1) to create a new draft version, 2) to delete an entire topic, or 3) to select a topic version to work with. When the administrator has made its

choice in step 490, the process moves based on this choice to step 500, wherein the entire topic is removed", to step 510, wherein a topic is selected to be used, or to step 530, which creates a new draft. In step 500, the administrator is asked to reconfirm that this topic is to be deleted. If the decision to delete is confirmed, the process returns to step 440, and if reversed, the process moves to step 480. If the administrator decided in step 490 to revise a particular topic, the process moves to step 510, where the administrator modifies the topic content and then clicks "Save" in step 520 before the process returns to step 440. If the administrator elected in step 490 to create a new topic menu, the administrator proceeds to compose a new draft. In an illustrative example, step 530 offers a number of template examples (stored in the related proprietor files 36 of the server 14 of Figure 1) from which a new menu may be created. For example, the possible templates that may be selected could be particularly adapted for job announcements, training courses, demographic information, a calendar and free form. After the administrator selects one of these templates for the new draft version of the topic and has clicked on "continue" in step 540, a page is displayed in step 550 that allows administrator to add content. After all of the new content has been entered into the selected template, the administrator clicks on "save" in step 560, whereby a new draft version is created in step 570. The process is then returned to step 480.

After the administrator has clicked in step 580 on the link 300e (Figure 5), the administrator is presented in step 590 with a page that allows the administrator to change or add to the links and link names of the portion 42f of the home page 40 of the proprietor site (Figure 4B). Once the administrator clicks in step 600 on "Save", the process is returned in step 610 to the control panel 300 (Figure 5).

It is appreciated that the administrator is not authorized to change or edit the content and/or links of the portions 42b and c of the proprietor site homepage 40 as shown in Figure 4B. Rather, only the host or its employees are enabled to change the portions 42b and c as will be explained in detail below with respect to Figure 14.

Referring now to Figure 8, when the administrator has clicked in step 620 on the link 300f of the control panel 300 (Figure 5), a screen is displayed in step 630 that gives the administrator the choice either: 1) to modify the profile questions or 2) to view or edit individual profiles. If the administrator elects in step 640 to modify the profile questions, a page is displayed in step 700 that allows the administrator to revise the profile questions and content. Once the administrator clicks in step 710 on "Save", the process is returned in step 720 to the site control panel 300 (Figure 5). If the administrator elected in step 640 to edit the user profiles, a page is presented in step 650 that lists the selectable user profiles. Once a profile is selected by the administrator, the selected user profile is displayed in step 660, which links the administrator to step 670. When the administrator clicks in step 670 on "Edit This Policy, the administrator is enabled in step 680 to edit this user's profile. Once the

administrator clicks in step 685 on "Submit Changes", the process is returned in step 690 to the control panel 300 (Figure 5).

Referring now to Figure 9, when the administrator clicks in step 730 on link 300g (Figure 5), the administrator is prompted by the display in step 740 of a screen to input the names and passwords of users. After the administrator inputs the names and passwords of users and clicks in step 750 on "Submit", the process is returned to step 740, wherein the administrator can input another user's information. Steps 740 and 750 may be repeated, until the administrator has entered all of the user information.

When the administrator clicks in step 760 on the link 300h (Figure 5), a page is displayed in step 770 that allows the administrator to input the names and passwords of additional site administrators. Once the administrator clicks in step 780 on the "Submit" tab, the administrator is returned to step 770, wherein the administrator can input in step 770 another authorized administrator's information. Steps 770 and 780 may be repeated until the information of all desired administrators has been entered.

When the administrator clicks in Step 790 on link 300i (Figure 5), a page is displayed in step 800 that allows the administrator to choose either: 1) when or 2) where to block access to the proprietor's web site. Step 800 allows the administrator to choose when or where to block access of employees to the site. Depending on the choice made in step 800, the administrator enters the time/date when or the place where access to the site will be blocked. Once the administrator clicks on "Save" in step 820, the process is returned in step 830 to the site control panel 300 (Figure 5).

When the administrator clicks in step 840 on link 300j, a page is displayed in step 850 with a selectable list of previously sorted site usage information. For example, such information may take the form of a list of users, who are logged into the site of interest, which topics the users accessed, and how long the users were logged into each of these topics. The administrator clicks in step 860 on the needed usage from the list of usages listed on the displayed page. Then, the selected usage information is displayed in step 870. After viewing the information, the administrator clicks on the "main menu" button to access the control panel 300.

When the administrator clicks in step 880 on the "Site Size" link 300k (Figure 5), information about the hard disk space will be displayed in step 890. For example such information would include: 1) the current amount of disk space that is being used, and 2) the costs that will be incurred as a result of using hard disk space over a predetermined limit.

When the administrator clicks in step 900 on the "Fee Schedule" link 300l, step 910 displays fee schedule information. Such fee schedule information may include: 1) initial license fees, 2) a per registered user monthly fee, 3) the minimums and maximums per registered user monthly fees.

When the administrator clicks in step 920 on the "Site Agreement" link 300m (Figure 5), step 930 displays the site agreement that was accepted by this web site's proprietor.

When the administrator clicks on step 940 on the "Account Profile" link 300n (Figure 5), step 950 displays the account profile information, which illustratively includes contact information in terms of the address, phone and fax numbers for and the name of the proprietor and of the primary administrator.

Figure 10 is a diagram that represents the process of managing 900 carried out by the host of the server 14 or the host's employees to manage the server 14 and to exchange information with the site proprietor and the sponsors. In step 970, a host employee enters in its browser the URL address of the main or home page of the server 14 (Figure 1). Thereafter, the host employee is presented with a home page 995 of the host in the form of a menu, which shows the many links for the purpose of managing client sites. Home application file 30 (Figure 1) implements the management homepage 995; the server host or its employees communicate with the management home page 995 whereby the server 14 is managed as will be explained below.

Step 990 represents the action of clicking on one of the links. In particular, link 990a brings the host employee to step 1000 (Figure 11). Link 990b brings the host employee to step 1060 (Figure 11). Link 990c brings the host employee to step 1090 (Figure 11). Link 990d brings the host employee to step 1150 (Figure 12). Link 990e brings the host employee to step 1190 (Figure 12). Link 990f brings the host employee to step 1230 (Figure 12). Link 990g brings the host employee to step 1290 (Figure 12). Link 990h brings the host employee to step 1330 (Figure 12). Link 990i brings the host employee to step 1370 (Figure 12). Link 990j brings the host employee to step 1430 (Figure 12). Link 990k brings the host employee to step 1470 (Figure 13). Link 990l brings the host employee to step 1490 (Figure 13). Link 990m brings the host employee to step 1510 (Figure 13). Link 990n brings the host employee to step 1550 (Figure 13). Link 990o brings the host employee to step 1610 (Figure 13). Link 990p brings the host employee to step 1650 (Figure 13). Link 990q brings the host employee to step 1690 (Figure 13). Link 990r brings the host employee to step 1730 (Figure 14). Link 990s brings the host employee to step 1790 (Figure 14). Link 990t brings the host employee to step 1830 (Figure 14). Link 990u brings the host employee to step 1890 (Figure 14). Link 990v brings the host employee to step 1930 (Figure 15).

Referring now to Figure 11, when the host employee has clicked in step 1000 on the "Company Heading" link 990a of the management or host homepage 995 (Figure 10), a screen is displayed in step 1000 to facilitate a host employee to find information about the proprietors. Step 1000 provides a list of the headings or categories by which various attributes of the proprietor may be categorized or sorted. For example, attributes of the proprietor may be categorized or alphabetized. For example, the presorted categories of proprietor attributes may include: 1) a list of alphabetized

names of the proprietors, 2) an alphabetized list of the states where the proprietors are located, 3) an alphabetized list of the names of the primary administrator of the proprietors, 4) a chronological list of the start dates of the proprietors, 5) an alphabetized list the sponsors of the proprietors, and 6) an alphabetized list of the URL's of the proprietors. Once a presorted heading or category is selected by the host employee in step 1000, a list of the proprietors arranged according to the presorted heading or category is displayed in step 1010. Once the host employee clicks in step 1020 on the displayed proprietor site record, a screen displays in step 1030 the proprietor's record, e.g., its contact information and a link to the proprietor's web site. The host employee clicks in step 1040 on the link to the proprietor's web site, whereby the host employee is granted access in step 1050 to the proprietor's site.

When the host employee clicks in step 1060 on the link 990b, a page is displayed in step 1070 that allows the host employee to enter search criteria or a search delimiter for the purpose of searching for the record of a particular proprietor. Illustratively, such delimiters or criteria may include: 1) the proprietor's name, the nested URL of the proprietor's folder 32, etc. Once the host employee clicks in step 1080 on "to find", a screen bearing a list of the proprietors that match the criteria entered is displayed. Once the host employee clicks in step 1030 (as described above) on a particular proprietor, the record of that proprietor is displayed. When the host employee clicks on the site link in step 1040, the host employee is taken in step 1050 to the web site of the selected proprietor.

When the host employee clicks in step 1090 on the link 990c, a page bearing an alphabetized list of registered users in groups of 100 is displayed in step 1100. Once the host employee clicks on a particular group in step 1110, the host employee is presented with a display of the names of all of the user's proprietors in the group selected. Once the host employee clicks in step 1130 on a name of one of the proprietors of the displayed group, a screen bearing the selected proprietor's user information, e.g., the user's first or last name, is displayed to the host employee in step 1140.

Referring now to Figure 12, when the host employee clicks on the "Find User" link 990d in step 1150, a "User Lookup" form is displayed in step 1160 that allows the host employee to input a known name of a user into a search engine. Once the host administrator clicks in step 1170 on "Find", a list of all the proprietors that match the inputted user name and links to those proprietors are displayed in step 1180. Once the host employee clicks in step 1184 on a company link, the host employee is returned in step 1186 to step 1030 (Figure 1100), whereby information may be viewed in step 1030 and the host employee may be taken to the web site of this particular proprietor in step 1050 as described above.

After the host employee has clicked in step 1190 on the "Create Letter" link 990e, a form is displayed in step 1200 that allows the host employee to input an e-mail, i.e., the letter, which is customized to be sent to one or more site of the primary administrators. Such letters permit the host

employees to notify the primary administrators and the proprietors the current status of the system (outages), changes in host policy, etc. After the e-mail has been entered and the host employee has clicked in step 1210 on "Save Letter", the host employee is returned in step 1280 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

5 When the host employee clicks in step 1230 the "View All Letters" link 990f, all of the saved letters are displayed in step 1240. Once the host employee clicks on one of the saved letters to "Edit" in step 1250, the host employee is presented in step 1260 with a page that allows the host employee to edit the selected letter. After the host employee has clicked in step 1270 on "Save and close", the host employee is returned in step 1280 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

10 When the host employee has clicked in step 1290 on the "New Invitation" link 990g, a form is displayed in step 1300 that allows the host employee to revise and customize the invitation number attributes, e.g., the name of the sponsor and the advantageous pricing provided to the sponsor's prospective proprietors. Once the host employee clicks in step 1310 on "Save and close", the edited invitation is stored and the host employee is returned in step 1320 to the management homepage 15 (995).

When the host employee clicks in step 1330 on the "Import Invitations" link 990h, a page is displayed in step 1340 that allows the host employee to import the invitation numbers and attributes, e.g., pricing, name of sponsor, the invitation ID, the number of invitations of a sponsor, etc. Once the host employee clicks on "Save" in step 1350, the imported invitation is saved and the host employee 20 is returned in step 1360 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

When the host employee has clicked in step 1370 on the "View Invitations" link 990i, a page is displayed in step 1380 that lists the invitation numbers in groups of one hundred. Once the host employee clicks on a selected group in step 1390, a page bearing a list of the invitations of the selected group is displayed in step 1400. Once the host employer clicks in step 1410 on its selected 25 invitation, the selected invitation number information is displayed in step 1420.

After the host employee has clicked in step 1430 on the "View Used Invitations" link 990j (Figure 10), a list of all the used invitation numbers is displayed in step 1440. Once the host employee has clicked in step 1450 on a selected used invitation, the number's information of the selected used invitation is displayed in step 1460. The number's information indicate which 30 proprietors used a particular invitation, when an invitation was used, the number of proprietors who used an invitation, etc.

Referring now to Figure 13, when the host employee clicks in step 1470 on the "User Rankings" link 990k (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1480 with a display of the rankings of and other information about the users who have played a game, for example the 35 "Investment Challenge" game in one illustrative embodiment of this invention. It is contemplated that

a game is programmed to be played by users of a particular proprietor site. The scores of the employees are kept and the rankings of the users over a prescribed period of time are also kept in the server's records. As will be discussed below, the starting dates for the prescribed periods of time are also kept.

5 When the host employee has clicked in step 1490 on the "View Start Date" link 990l, a page is displayed in step 1500 that lists the "Investment Challenge" game's start dates. the host employee clicks in step 1510 on the "New Start Date" link 990m (Figure 10) to then display in step 1520 a form that allows the host employee to input new start dates for the "Investment Challenge" game. Once the host employee has revised the start dates and has clicked on "Submit" in step 1530, the host employee
10 is returned in step 1540 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 After the host employee has clicked in step 1550 on the "View Current Pricing Tracks" link 990n, a list of ID numbers, each identifying a pricing track for its proprietor, is displayed in step 1560. Once the host employee has selected and clicked in step 1570 on a particular ID pricing track number, a page is displayed in step 1580 that allows the host employee to edit the pricing track. When the host
15 employee clicks in step 1590 on "Save and Close" the revised pricing track is stored and the host employee is returned in step 1600 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 After the host employee has clicked in step 1610 on the "Create New Pricing Track" link 990o, the host employee is authorized in step 1620 to create a new pricing track. After the host employee has clicked on "Save & Close" and saved the new pricing track in step 1630, the host
20 employee is returned in step 1640 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 After the host employee clicks in step 1650 on the "View Menu Sponsors" link 990p (Figure 10), a page is displayed in step 1660 baring a list or menu of all of the sponsors. Once the host employee selects and clicks in step 1670 on the name of the selected sponsor, a page is displayed in step 1680 presenting information of the selected sponsor and permitting the host employee to edit that
25 information. This sponsor information includes for example: 1) sponsor name, 2) contact information such as address, E-mail and telephone numbers of the sponsor, etc. After the host employee has saved the updated sponsor information and has clicked on "Save & Close" in step 1682, the host employee is returned in step 1685 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 After the host employee has clicked in step 1690 on the "Create New Menu Sponsor" link 990q (Figure 10), a form is displayed that allows the host employee to input new sponsor information as defined above. Once the host employee has save the inputted sponsor information and has clicked
30 in step 1710 on "Save and close", the host employee is returned in step 1710 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 Referring now to Figure 14, when the host employee has clicked in step 1730 on the "View
35 Menu" link 990r (Figure 10), a page is displayed in step 1740 that lists the menus of each sponsor.

Once the host employee selects and clicks in step 1750 on the selected name of a sponsor, the host employee is taken to a form that allows the host employee to edit the menu of selected sponsor. Once the edited menu has been saved and the "Save and close" button is clicked in step 1770, the host employee is returned in step 1780 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

5 After the host employee has clicked in step 1790 to the "Create Menu" link 990s (Figure 10), a form is displayed in step 1800 that allows the host employer to create a new menu for a sponsor by inputting to that page the menu name, which is that name given by the system to both of the sponsor portions 42b and c of the proprietor homepage 40 (Figure 4B), and labels, which are the titles given to each of the respective portions 42b and c. Once the host employee has saved the new sponsor menu
10 and has clicked in step 1810 on "Save and close", the host employee is returned in step 1820 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 Once the host employee has clicked in step 1830 on the "View Menu" link 990t (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1840 with a display that lists the current menu items of the proprietor. After the host employee selects and clicks in step 1850 on a selected menu item, a form is
15 displayed in step 1860 that allows the host employee to edit the content of the selected menu items. Once the host employee saves the edited menu item and clicks in step 1870, the host employee is returned in step 1880 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 When the host employee has clicked in step 1890 on the "Create Menu Item" link 990u (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1900 with a form that allows the host employee to
20 input: 1) the name of the label, which appears as a clickable link on the right hand portions 42b and c of the proprietor homepage 40 (Figure 4B), 2) the link to which a product or service sponsor as providing for the new item for menu of a given sponsor, and 3) a numeric ranking system to define the order in which the menu items will be displayed on the proprietor homepage 40. Once the host employee has saved the new item(s) and its name, and has clicked on "Save and close" in step 1910,
25 the host employee is returned in step 1920 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 Referring now to Figure 15, when the host employee has clicked in step 1930 on the "Generate Site(s)" link 990v (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1940 with a "Site Generation Creation Form" that allows the host employee to take two options. The host employee can: 1) upload a file, which contains formatted information that reserves multiple proprietor web sites,
30 or 2) reserve a single proprietor's web site by manually entering the required information. It is appreciated that the required information that must be entered includes a distinct URL for each site to be generated. The host employee selects and clicks on the desired option in step 1950. Next, step 1960 compares the URL that was assigned to each of the newly generated sites, to a stored list of URLs which have been previously assigned and are not therefor available to be assigned. If the URL
35 is found in the list and therefore is unavailable, an error message identifying the unavailable URL is

generated and transmitted in step 1980 to step 1940. Once a URL is selected that is available, the primary administrator's name corresponding to the URL's site is compared with a list of all of the participant's names on the server 14. If the primary administrator's name is unavailable, step 1940 is served in step 1980 with an error message stating that the selected primary administrator's name is
5 taken. Once a primary administrator's name is selected that is available as determined in step 1970, the information, i.e., the preliminary site's URL and the primary administrator's name, is saved in step 1990. Thereafter, the host employee is returned in step 2000 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 1) and the proprietor's web site is displayed.

We claim:

1. A method of using a server to construct on an undivided memory a plurality of web sites, each web site being related to an administrator, said method comprising the steps of:

5 (a) creating a template with a set of operations that will facilitate each of said plurality of administrators to construct and input content into its related web site; and

(b) responding to an administrator's logging on to the server to initiate a process of constructing a web site, said process including the steps of:

1. allocating a portion of the undivided memory to form a file for receiving site content, and

10 2. refreshing from said template said set of operations into said web site file, whereby each web site has its own set of operations to construct and input content into its file.

2. A server adapted to communicate over a network with network sites connected thereto, the network sites operating in a language adapted for transmission over the network and use by the network sites, said server comprising:

15 (a) a memory comprising a plurality of files;

(b) a plurality of sites formed on said server, each of said plurality of sites comprising one of said files, said plurality of files being filled with content written in a native language other than the network adapted language;

20 (c) an engine for converting the native language into the network adapted language; and

(d) a controller responsive to a request from one of the network sites for the content of one of said server sites to download from said server site its content in its native language to said engine, whereby said engine converts the downloaded native language of said one server site into the network adapted language for transmission over the internet to the requesting network site.

25 3. A server as claimed in claim 2, wherein the network in the Internet and the network adapted language is HTML.

4. A server adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators, said server comprising:

(a) a memory comprising a plurality of files;

30 (b) a plurality of sites formed on said server, each of said plurality of sites comprising one of said plurality of files; and

(c) said file of each of said plurality of server sites storing a set of operations that an administrator related to one site may use to construct its site and to input data into said site's file at the discretion of the related administrator.

5 5. A method of operating a server to preassign a plurality of web sites to a plurality of prospects, the server including a memory on which a plurality of web sites may be constructed, said method comprising the steps of:

 (a) developing a list of prospects for a web site;

 (b) providing to each of the prospects an indication that a web site has been assigned to each prospect;

10 (c) notifying said prospects that a web site has been preassigned to said prospect and that each prospect has been assigned said indication;

 (d) at least one prospect logging on to said server and inputting its indication thereto; and

15 (e) the server responding to the prospect's logging onto said server and said indication to construct on the memory a web site for the prospect.

6. A server adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators and a plurality of users, said server comprising:

 (a) a plurality of virgin sites ready to be generated and loaded with content;

20 (b) a controller for receiving communications from each of the plurality of administrators and the plurality of users;

 (c) each of said plurality of web sites having a file for receiving content;

 (d) said server being programmed with a set of operations for constructing and loading each of said virgin sites; and

25 (e) said controller permissioning one of the plurality of administrators to access said set operations whereby the administrator can construct and load with content a related site at the discretion of the permissioned administrator, and responsive to a communication of a user to only access and view the content loaded into the user's related web site.

7. A method of adapting a server to permission users to access at least one web site, the one web site having a content file, said method comprising the steps:

30 (a) constructing and filling the content file of the web site with content;

 (b) permissioning an administrator to control the access to one web site by uploading the names of permissioned users in a user file; and

(c) permissioning a user to gain access to the one web site and to view its content by matching the name of the user with a name in the user file.

8. A method of facilitating a host to manage a plurality of web sites, each of said plurality of web sites including a file, said method comprising the steps of:

- 5 (a) creating a master template with a set of operations for constructing and loading content to each file of said plurality of web sites;
- (b) the host giving instructions to said master file to determine said set of operations;
- and
- (c) repetitively refresh each file of said plurality of web sites with said set of
- 10 operations from said master template, whereby the construction and loading of content to each web site is controlled by the host.

9. A server adapted to communicate over a network with each of an administrator, a user and a host of the server, said server comprising:

- 15 (a) a plurality of virgin web sites ready to be constructed, each web site having a file ready to be filed with content; and
- (b) a controller programmed to communicate separately with each of the administrator, the user and the host, to generate a distinct home page upon the login of each of the administrator, the user and the host, said administrator's homepage comprising a set of links to construct and to load content to the file of the administrator's web site, said user's homepage
- 20 comprising a link permitting the user access to the contents of the file of its website, and a host's homepage having a set of links to manage said server and to keep track and to manage the use of said plurality of web sites.

10. A method of granting access for at least one prospective proprietor to one of a plurality of web sites created on a server, said method comprising the steps of:

- 25 (a) inputting a request from the one prospective proprietor to the one web site;
- (b) responding to the prospective proprietor's request to construct a web site on the server and to grant proprietor access to the one web site;
- (c) prompt the prospective proprietor to agree to use the web site; and
- (d) responding to the prospective proprietor's agreement to use the site by publishing
- 30 the prospective proprietor's on a network.

11. A method of managing the access of a number of participants to a plurality of web sites created on a server, the participants including a host of the server, a proprietor of at least one of the

plurality of web sites, and plurality of users of the proprietor's one web site, method comprising the steps of:

(a) programming the server to establish a hierarchy of access levels to the plurality of web sites; and

5 (b) assigning levels of access to the host, the proprietor and the users such that the host has the highest level of access, the proprietor an intermediate level of access, and the user the lowest level of access.



IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

Published:

— *With international search report.*



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US00/24524

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : G06F 15/16

US CL : 709/203, 217

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 709/203, 217

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
FOLDOC computing dictionary

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EAST, WEST, STN

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5,793,972 A (SHANE) 11 August 1998, col. 3-7	1-11
Y	US 5,894,554 A (LOWERY et al.) 13 April 1999, col. 3-8	1-11
X	US 5,940,834 A (PINARD et al.) 17 August 1999, col. 3-9	1-11
Y,P	US 6,085,229 A (NEWMAN et al.) 04 July 2000, col. 3-13	1-11

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	*T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
A document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	*X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
E earlier document published on or after the international filing date	*Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
L document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	*A* document member of the same patent family
O document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
P document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

11 NOVEMBER 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

20 DEC 2000

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Box PCT
Washington, D.C. 20231

Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230

Authorized officer

SALEH NAJJAR

Telephone No. (703) 308-7613

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

(PCT Article 18 and Rules 43 and 44)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 23195.01	FOR FURTHER ACTION <small>see Notification of Transmittal of International Search Report (Form PCT/ISA/220) as well as, where applicable, item 5 below.</small>	
International application No. PCT/US00/24524	International filing date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 07 SEPTEMBER 2000	(Earliest) Priority Date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 07 SEPTEMBER 1999
Applicant WORKPLUS.COM INC.		

This international search report has been prepared by this International Searching Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 18. A copy is being transmitted to the International Bureau.

This international search report consists of a total of 3 sheets.

☒ It is also accompanied by a copy of each prior art document cited in this report.

1. Basis of the report

a. With regard to the **language**, the international search was carried out on the basis of the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

☐ the international search was carried out on the basis of a translation of the international application furnished to this Authority (Rule 23.1(b)).

b. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international search was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

☐ contained in the international application in written form.

☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.

☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.

☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.

☐ the statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.

☐ the statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

2. ☐ **Certain claims were found unsearchable** (See Box I).

3. ☐ **Unity of invention is lacking** (See Box II).

4. With regard to the **title**,

☒ the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

☐ the text has been established by this Authority to read as follows:

5. With regard to the **abstract**,

☐ the text is approved as submitted by the applicant.

☒ the text has been established, according to Rule 38.2(b), by this Authority as it appears in Box III. The applicant may, within one month from the date of mailing of this international search report, submit comments to this Authority.

6. The figure of the **drawings** to be published with the abstract is Figure No. 1

☐ as suggested by the applicant.

☒ because the applicant failed to suggest a figure.

☐ because this figure better characterizes the invention.

☐ None of the figures.

Box III TEXT OF THE ABSTRACT (Continuation of item 5 of the first sheet)

There is disclosed a server (14), which is adapted to communicate over a network (12) with each of an administrator (16a-4), a user (16a-1) and a host (16f) of the server. The server comprises a plurality of virgin web sites ready to be constructed; each web site has a file ready to be filed with content. The server further includes a controller, which is programmed to communicate separately with each of the administrator, the user and the host, to generate a distinct home page upon the login of each of the administrator, the user and the host. The administrator's homepage comprises a set of links to construct and to load content to the file of the administrator's web site. The user's homepage comprises a link permitting the user access to the contents of the file of its website. The host's homepage has a set of links to manage the server, and to keep track and to manage the serve, and to keep track and to manage the use of the plurality of web sites.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US00/24524

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : G06F 15/16

US CL : 709/203, 217

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 709/203, 217

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
FOLDOC computing dictionaryElectronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EAST, WEST, STN**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5,793,972 A (SHANE) 11 August 1998, col. 3-7	1-11
Y	US 5,894,554 A (LOWERY et al.) 13 April 1999, col. 3-8	1-11
X	US 5,940,834 A (PINARD et al.) 17 August 1999, col. 3-9	1-11
Y,P	US 6,085,229 A (NEWMAN et al.) 04 July 2000, col. 3-13	1-11

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:	*T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
A document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	*X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
E earlier document published on or after the international filing date	*Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
L document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	*G* document member of the same patent family
O document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
P document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

11 NOVEMBER 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

26 DEC 2000

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US
Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Box PCT
Washington, D.C. 20231

Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230

Authorized officer

SALEH NAJJAR

James R. Matthews

Telephone No. (703) 308-7613

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT
CORRECTED

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

REC'D 12 APR 2002

WIPO PCT

Applicant's or agent's file reference 23195.01	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/US00/24524	International filing date (day/month/year) 07 SEPTEMBER 2000	Priority date (day/month/year) 07 SEPTEMBER 1999
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC IPC(7): G06F 15/16 and US Cl.: 709/203, 217		
Applicant WORKPLUS.COM, INC.		

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.
2. This REPORT consists of a total of 5 sheets.

☐ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority. (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 13 sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I ☒ Basis of the report
- II ☐ Priority
- III ☐ Non-establishment of report with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability
- IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention
- V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability, citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI ☐ Certain documents cited
- VII ☐ Certain defects in the international application
- VIII ☐ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 19 MARCH 2001	Date of completion of this report 30 SEPTEMBER 2001
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box POT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Authorized officer <i>Susan C. Wickett for</i> SALEH NAJJAR Telephone No. (703) 308-7613

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US00/24524

I. Basis of this report**1. With regard to the elements of the international application:***

- ☐ the international application as originally filed
- ☒ the description:
pages _____ (See Attached) _____, as originally filed
pages _____, filed with the demand
pages _____, filed with the letter of _____
- ☒ the claims:
pages _____ (See Attached) _____, as originally filed
pages _____, as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19
pages _____, filed with the demand
pages _____, filed with the letter of _____
- ☒ the drawings:
pages _____ (See Attached) _____, as originally filed
pages _____, filed with the demand
pages _____, filed with the letter of _____
- ☒ the sequence listing part of the description:
pages _____ (See Attached) _____, as originally filed
pages _____, filed with the demand
pages _____, filed with the letter of _____

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language _____ which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in printed form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. ☒ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☒ the description, pages _____ NONE _____
- ☒ the claims, Nos. _____ NONE _____
- ☒ the drawings, sheets/fig _____ NONE _____

5. ☐ This report has been drawn as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).

**Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY

To: R. LEWIS GABLE
COWAN, LIEBOWITZ & LATMAN, P.C.
1133 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
35TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10036

PCT

NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT OR THE DECLARATION

(PCT Rule 44.1)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 23195.01	Date of Mailing (day/month/year) 26 DEC 2000
International application No. PCT/US00/24524	International filing date (day/month/year) 07 SEPTEMBER 2000
Applicant WORKPLUS.COM INC.	

1. ☒ The applicant is hereby notified that the international search report has been established and is transmitted herewith.

Filing of amendments and statement under Article 19:
The applicant is entitled, if he so wishes, to amend the claims of the international application (see Rule 46):

When? The time limit for filing such amendments is normally 2 months from the date of transmittal of the international search report; however, for more details, see the notes on the accompanying sheet.

Where? Directly to the International Bureau of WIPO
34, chemin des Colombettes
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland
Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35

For more detailed instructions, see the notes on the accompanying sheet.

2. ☐ The applicant is hereby notified that no international search report will be established and that the declaration under Article 17(2)(a) to that effect is transmitted herewith.

3. ☐ With regard to the protest against payment of (an) additional fee(s) under Rule 40.2, the applicant is notified that:

☐ the protest together with the decision thereon has been transmitted to the International Bureau together with the applicant's request to forward the texts of both the protest and the decision thereon to the designated Offices.

☐ no decision has been made yet on the protest; the applicant will be notified as soon as a decision is made.

4. Further action(s): The applicant is reminded of the following:

Shortly after 18 months from the priority date, the international application will be published by the International Bureau. If the applicant wishes to avoid or postpone publication, a notice of withdrawal of the international application, or of the priority claim, must reach the International Bureau as provided in rules 90 bis 1 and 90 bis 3, respectively, before the completion of the technical preparations for international publication.

Within 19 months from the priority date, a demand for international preliminary examination must be filed if the applicant wishes to postpone the entry into the national phase until 30 months from the priority date (in some Offices even later).

Within 20 months from the priority date, the applicant must perform the prescribed acts for entry into the national phase before all designated Offices which have not been elected in the demand or in a later election within 19 months from the priority date or could not be elected because they are not bound by Chapter II.

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Authorized officer SALEH NAJJAR <i>James R. Matthews</i> Telephone No. (703) 308-7613
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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US00/24524

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**1. statement**

Novelty (N)	Claims	<u>6, 8-11, 13-18</u>	YES
	Claims	<u>1-5, 7, 12</u>	NO
Inventive Step (IS)	Claims	<u>6, 8-11, 13-18</u>	YES
	Claims	<u>1-5, 7, 12</u>	NO
Industrial Applicability (IA)	Claims	<u>1-18</u>	YES
	Claims	<u>NONE</u>	NO

2. citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

1. Claims 1-5, 7, and 12 lack novelty under PCT Article 33(2) as being anticipated by Shane, U.S. Patent No. 5,793,972.

Shane teaches the invention as claimed including a system for providing a interactive response to recipients by creating personalized WEB pages based on recipient response (see abstract).

As to claim 1, Shane teaches a method of using a server to construct on an undivided memory a plurality of web sites, each web site being related to an administrator (see figs. 1-4e; col. 2-4), said method comprising the steps of:

(a) creating a template with a set of operations that will facilitate each of said plurality of administrators to construct and input content into its related web site (see figs. 1-4e; col. 4-6, Shane teaches that a standardized web page is presented to the respondent which is customized based on respondent's input); and

(b) responding to an administrator's logging on to the server to initiate a process of constructing a web site (see col. 4-6, Shane teaches that a respondent logs onto the server to access and customize the standardized web site), said process including the steps of:

1. allocating a portion of the undivided memory to form a file for receiving site content (see col. 4-7, Shane teaches a memory for storing respondent information for filling the customized web page), and

2. refreshing from said template said set of operations into said web site file, whereby each web site has its own set of operations to construct and input content into its file.(see col. 6-7, Shane teaches that respondent database is utilized using the CGI scripts to customize the web page).

(Continued on Supplemental Sheet.)

Supplemental Box

(To be used when the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient)

Continuation of: Boxes I - VIII

Sheet 10

I. BASIS OF REPORT:

This report has been drawn on the basis of the description,
page(s) 1-3, 12-15, 17-19, and 21, as originally filed.
page(s) None, filed with the demand.
and additional amendments:
pages 4-11a, 16, and 20 filed with the amendment in the letter of 06 August 2001.

This report has been drawn on the basis of the claims,
page(s) 22-24, as originally filed.
page(s) NONE, as amended under Article 19.
page(s) NONE, filed with the demand.
and additional amendments:
Claim pages 25-25a filed with the amendment in the letter of August 6, 2001.

This report has been drawn on the basis of the drawings,
page(s) 1-18, as originally filed.
page(s) NONE, filed with the demand.
and additional amendments:
NONE

This report has been drawn on the basis of the sequence listing part of the description:
page(s) NONE, as originally filed.
pages(s) NONE, filed with the demand.
and additional amendments:
NONE

V. 2. REASONED STATEMENTS - CITATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS (Continued):

As to claim 4, Shane teaches a server adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators, said server comprising:

- a) a memory comprising a plurality of file (see figs. 1-4e);
- b) a plurality of sites formed on said server, each of said plurality of sites comprising one of said plurality of files (see col. 4-7, Shane teaches that a plurality of web pages are generated at the server customized; and
- c) said file of said plurality of server sites storing a set of operations that an administrator related to one site may use to construct its site and to input data into said sites file at the discretion of the related administrator (see col. 4-6, Shane discloses that a cgi script file is stored for each user).

As to claim 5, Shane teaches a method of operating a server to preassign a plurality of web sites to a plurality of prospects, the server including a memory on which a plurality of web sites may be constructed (see figs. 1-2), said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) developing a list of prospects for a web site (see figs. 1-4; col. 4, lines 20-30, Shane teaches that recipient database is used to develop a recipient list eligible for a WEB site);
- (b) providing to each of the prospects an indication that a web site has been assigned to each prospect (see col. 3-5, Shane teaches that recipients are sent notifications indicating a WEB site assigned to the recipient);
- (c) notifying said prospects that a web site has been preassigned to said prospect and that each prospect has been assigned said indication (see col. 6, Shane teaches that recipients are notified that a WEB site is assigned to them and are provided a unique login URL for admission to the WEB page);
- (d) at least one prospect logging on to said server and inputting its indication thereto; and (e) the server responding to the prospect's logging onto said server and said indication to construct on the memory a web site for the prospect (see col.

Supplemental B x

(To be used when the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient)

Continuation of: Boxes I - VIII

Sheet 11

7-8, Shane teaches that a recipient logs onto the site by presenting the unique URL and the server responding to the logon by the user by generating and presenting to the user a personalized WEB page).

As to claim 7, Shane teaches a method of adapting a server to permission users to access at least one web site, the one web site having a content file, said method comprising the steps of:

a) constructing and filling the content file of the web site with content (see figs. 1-4; col. 4-7, Shane teaches that a customized web page is filled with content to reflect the client);

b) permissioning an administrator to control the access to one web site by uploading the names of the permissioned users in a user file (see col. 4-7, Shane teaches that the administrator provide a list of users that can access the web site using the URL e-mailed to the list of users;; and

c) permissioning the user to access the one web site and to view its content by matching the name of the user with a name in a user file (see col. 4-7, Shane discloses that the user is compared to the list of users permissioned to access the web site).

As to claim 12, Shane teaches a method of operating on a host computer to facilitate the management of each of a plurality web sites by at least one administrator for each of the plurality of web sites, comprising:

a) constructing in the host computer a file for each of the plurality of web sites (see figs. 1-4; col. 4-6, Shane teaches that a plurality of client records are recorded at the server);

b) inputting to select of the plurality of web sites a set of operations that will facilitate each of the plurality of administrators to control the construction, operation and inputting of content into its related web site (see col. 4-7, Shane discloses that the server administrator facilitates the execution of a script enabling the users to customize their web page); and

c) constructing and displaying to each of the plurality of administrators a control panel that will facilitate each administrator to control the execution of selected of set of operations of its web site (see col. 4-7, Shane teaches that the user is presented with choices used to customized the web page).

Claims 2-3 do not teach or define any new limitations above claims 1, 4-5, 7, 12 and therefore are rejected for similar reasons

2. Claims 6, 8,-11, 13-18 meet the criteria set out in PCT Article 33(2)-(3), because the prior art does not teach or fairly suggest facilitating the reception of content by administrators having control over its web site and users having only read access to the web site.

3. Claims 1-18 meet the criteria set out in PCT Article 33(4), because the system functions in an automatic web-posting system.

----- NEW CITATIONS -----

NONE

Figure 5 is a screen that presents a control panel of tools to be used by the administrator to construct and load the web site with content;

Figures 6 - 9 represent the process by which the administrators use the tools of the control panel shown in Figure 5 to construct and load a proprietor's web site with content;

5 Figure 10 is a screen that shows the homepage of the server management system; and

Figures 11 - 15 represent the process by which the host or its employees manage the server to allocate the proprietor's web sites embedded in the server and to keep track and manage their use of the web sites.

DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

10 Referring now to the drawings and, in particular, to Figure 1, there is shown a web site creation and management system 10, which use a network, i.e., an Internet 12 in one illustrative embodiment of this invention, to facilitate communication by the various participants who use and/or interact this system, namely site proprietors, users, sponsors and a server host and its employees, as will be explained below. Generally, the server host or its employees secure and program the server 14
15 to create on the server 14 a plurality of web sites. Typically, the server host markets and allocates these ready to be loaded or programmed with content web sites to prospective proprietors. In turn, the proprietor loads its web site with its content and, further, authorizes certain users to access and view the proprietor's content. Other participants to the system 10 include a primary administrator and an associate administrator. As will be explained below, the site proprietor can designate a primary
20 administrator with the authority to program the web site of its proprietor's web site with content and, further, to designate one or more associate administrators with limited authority to only load the web site with content.

The process of the host's marketing these web sites to prospective proprietors, the proprietors' acquiring the use of a web site on the server 14, the users' accessing and viewing of it proprietor's site
25 content, and the primary and associate administrators to load or program content on to its proprietor's web site, use the Internet 12 to facilitate communication between the prospective and site proprietors, the users and the primary and associate administrators, and the server 14. In particular, each prospective proprietor has a terminal 16e, the site proprietors terminals 16a-1 and 16a-2, each primary administrator a terminal 16c-1, each associate administrator a terminal 16d-4, each user a terminal
30 16b-3, and each host employee a terminal 16f.

The server 14 has a host web site 20 with a root URL. The host web site 20 has a plurality of application programs 22 - 30, which effect the creation and content loading of each of the proprietors' web sites and permits the server host to manage the server 14 and the web sites allocated to the site proprietors, as will be explained below. These web site application programs include the login

application program 22, the management application program 24, the site template application program 26, the invitations management application program 28 and the home page management application program 30.

5 Though not separately shown in Figure 1, the applications programs are stored on a hard disc memory of the server 14. The hard disc of the server 14 is further subdivided into a number folders 32a - n, one folder for each of the proprietor web sites to be implemented by the server 14. In particular, each folder 32 includes a set of proprietor files 36, which stores the content input by site's proprietor or its primary or associate administrator, and a web site URL detector 34. In addition to the root URL assigned to the host's web site 20 of the server 14, a nested URL unique to each proprietor and its web site is also assigned to each of the folders 32a - n to permit site content to be transmitted to a particular folder 32.

15 Each of the prospective proprietors, site proprietors, users, primary administrators, associate administrators and host employees may communicate with the server 14 by entering the root and the nested URLs into a browser of its terminal 16, whereby a message will be transmitted from that terminal 16 over the internet 12 to the server 14 and, in particular, to its host or main web site 20. The host web site 20 is coupled to its Login application file 22, which stores both the root URL of the site 20 and nested URLs for each of the folders 32. If the root URL and the nested URL attached to the message transmitted from one of the administrator terminals 16d-4 and 16c-1, or from one of the user terminal 16a-2 match the root URL and the nested URL retained in the login application file 22, the message will be transmitted to that folder 32 identified by the corresponding nested URL.

20 The management file 24 also stores a nested URL indicative of the file's address and the programming associated with the management of the server 14 by the host and its employees. Thus, a message from the host employee terminal 16f with the root URL of the host web site 20 and the nested URL of the Management file attached thereto, will be directed by the Login file 22 to the Management file 24 to initiate a management function as will be described below.

25 The server 14 illustratively takes the form of an IBM NetFinity 5000 server, which utilizes Microsoft NT as its operating system and Lotus Domino as its web server. Illustratively, the server 14 is dependent upon both the Notes formula language and LotusScript for its functionality, and Domino for its migration to the Internet 12. It is contemplated that the server 14 could be built and programmed with other hardware or software. In a preferred embodiment of this invention, the server 14 is implemented with a contemporary browser that is programmed with JavaScript for accessing the server 14. Each set of proprietor files 32 is implemented in one illustrative embodiment of this invention by a separate Lotus Notes database, which stores the proprietor content in the form of design elements including forms, views, agents, script libraries, navigators, subforms and documents.

All design elements are connected to converse with each other, as well as with the other databases within the application using both LotusScript and the Notes formula language.

The HTML files, that are ultimately transmitted to and from system participants, are created dynamically by a Lotus Domino engine 38. As shown in Figure 1, the engine is included within the server 14, and is interconnected with the proprietor file index 20, the folders 32, the URL detectors 34 and the proprietor files 36 to permit bidirectional flows of data to and from the server 14. HTML files from the participant's terminals 16 are transmitted over the Internet 12 to the server 24 and, in particular, to the engine where the HTML files are converted into LotusScript, in this example, and then directed to one of the URL detectors 34. A return signal, initially in LotusScript, is sent from the proprietor file 36 directly to the engine 38, which dynamically translates it into HTML, before sending it to one of the terminals 16. In particular, the engine 38 receives the data from the proprietor's file 36 and dynamically converts it into HTML for viewing on the browser of one of the participant's terminal 16. Specifically, the software allows the design elements described above, as well as the content files the proprietor may have stored with the proprietors' folders to be converted on the fly into HTML. It is appreciated that site content stored in the proprietor files 36 may be written in any of the well known languages, e.g., LotusScript, adobe, excel, word, word perfect etc. This engine 38 dynamically converts the site content, which is written in any of these languages, into HTML for transmission over the Internet 12 to one of the participants' terminals 16.

After each proprietor web site has been fully programmed and its content loaded into its set of proprietor files 32, that web site is given its own address or nested URL within the server domain, as well as its own distinct directory of the database kept in its proprietor files 36; in turn, this directory is kept within the proprietor file 18 to facilitate the transmission of messages to the addressed folder 32. In addition to having its own directory, as well as its own URL within the server domain, each published web site has its own unique security in terms of which user or administrator will gain access to a particular folder 32 and the site content stored in its proprietor files 36.

This invention permits one of the site proprietors to use a web site and to load the set of proprietor files 36 associated with its web site with that content the proprietor wishes to communicate with a selected population of users, without the need to obtain a server, to program it with that software necessary to create a web site, or to maintain the server and its software. For example, the site proprietor could be an employer, who wishes to communicate with its employees, i.e., the users in the context of this example. In this example, the web site content could be information about benefits offered by the employer for its users, company policy, job offerings or news, i.e., any information that the employer would need to share with its employees. More particularly, the invention is a process by which the site proprietors can utilize this invention to create a web site without the need of obtaining and programming a server in order to communicate with its users via the Internet. The process pursued by a prospective proprietor involves receiving the permission of the host of the server 14 to

use one of the plurality of web sites, which the host has established on its server 14 and manages as will be explained. In other words, the site proprietor nests a site on the root site or URL of the host's server 14. All site proprietors will nest a site on the same root URL.

This invention provides the programming for the creation of the web site for the site proprietor, whereby the site proprietor controls the site content, can change the content as frequently as desired and has control over the population of users who can access and view the proprietor's web site. Illustratively, the proprietor uses passwords and IDs to control which users have access to its web site. By contrast, the server host maintains and manages the web sites on its server 14. Further, neither of the users nor the server host can change the web site content. In particular, only the site proprietor or one designated by the proprietor, i.e., a primary or associate administrator, can change the web site content.

Further, this invention also provides tools to the server host for managing the invention in the form of the management application program 24, including allocating web sites at the host's discretion to selected site proprietors, creating and modifying pricing structures for the use of these sites by the site proprietors, modifying the layout of the corresponding menus of the assigned web sites, and providing general system maintenance to the sites and the server 14.

If the viewer has already registered, the viewer could choose to login and will be prompted for their user ID and password. Once logged in, they will be taken to a homepage 40 of their proprietor's site, as shown in Figure 3B. The administrators of the site can click on a "Control Panel" link 41, which brings them into their site's "Control Panel" screen 300, as shown in Figure 5. As will be described in detail below, the "Control Panel" link 41 appears on a header 42a of the homepage 40. The "Control Panel" 300 is the tool used by the administrators to manage both the content and the list of users who can access and view a particular proprietor site.

Referring now to Figure 2, a primary or associate administrator or a user transmits in a process 44 a request to the server 14. Initially in step 43, one of the above named participants inputs the root URL of the host's or main web site 20 of the server 14 into the browser of the participant's terminal 16 (Figure 1). In step 45, the URL borne by the message will first be compared to the URLs or addresses maintained in the proprietor file index 20 (Figure 1) and, if there is match between the root URL borne by the message and that retained in the index 20, the Login application program 22 of the host web site 20 will be invoked and a home page 47 of the main or host web site 20 as illustrated in Figure 2 will be displayed on the terminal 16 of the participant sending this message. As shown in Figure 2, the web site home page 47 displays the following three links: 1) "Request for Free Trial" 48, 2) "User Login" 50 and 3) "Demo Site" to prompt the participant to initiate one of the two suggested actions for continuation of the session. The first link "Free Trial" 48 invites a prospective proprietor to request a free trial of proprietor web site. The second hyperlink "User Login" 48 is addressed to

registered users and provides the opportunity to login. The third hyperlink "Demo Site" 49 invites a user to view one of a set of demonstration sites. The participant's clicking on link 48 bring the participant to step 51 of Figure 3. Clicking on the "Login" link 50 will bring the participant to step 140 of Figure 4a. Upon clicking on the "Demo Site" link 49, a screen displaying the various types of demonstration sites is presented to the participant, who then chooses which site to access and view. The web site home page 47 may also include in an illustrative embodiment of this invention links (not shown) to the various applicable policies, terms of use, user care, email response capability and other information about the proprietor sites.

Figure 3 shows the process of permitting a prospective proprietor to view a free trial, whereby the prospective proprietor can access, view and load content into the host web site 20 implemented on the server 14 for a limited period of time. When the prospective participant clicks on the "Request for Free Trial" link 48 (Figure 2), the program moves to the process 53 as shown in Figure 3, wherein a form is displayed in step 51 that requests the prospective proprietor to input the required information needed for a trial of the proprietor site, e.g., its name, the URL of its home site, and the name, initial ID, pass word and the e mail address of the proprietor's primary administrator. After the prospective proprietor has input the required information, the prospective proprietor clicks on the "Send" button in step 60 to transmit the required information to the host server 14. Next, step 70 displays a Thank You message in appreciation of the proprietor's input of the required information. The prospective proprietor user can click in step 80 on "home" to again display in step 90 the host's home page 47 shown in Figure 2. Also when the prospective proprietor clicks on "Send" in step 60, an email notification is generated and the request for a free trial site is also transmitted in step 100 to the management file 24, whereby a site is created, as will be described below in Figure 10, and a record of the trial site, the proprietor and related information is stored in step 110 in the server 14. Then an email is generated and transmitted in step 120 to notify the prospective proprietor that the site has been created and is now ready to be utilized and filled with content by the prospective proprietor.

Figure 4A shows the login process by a user or by a primary or associate administrator. If as shown in Figure 2 one of these participants clicked on the "Administrator/User Login" link 50, the program moves to step 140, wherein the participant is prompted to input its ID and password. In step 150, the participant's ID and password are compared with the IDs and passwords which are retained in the proprietor file index 18 (Figure 1). If step 150 determined that the participant is a user, then step 180 determines whether the user's name and password are associated with a site that is published, and further whether the user's name and pass word belongs to a primary or associate administrator or to a user. If step 150 determines that the participant's ID and password are associated with an administrator, then step 160 determines whether this is the first time that the administrator has logged in and the site is not published. Then step 170, based on the administrator's ID and password, retrieves and uses the preliminary site information to create the general layout of the proprietor's web

site. The detailed steps of the process carried out in step 170 to create the proprietor's web site are described in detail below with respect to Figure 4B. When the proprietor's web site has been constructed in step 170, the completed proprietor's site is published in step 180, its homepage 40, as shown in Figure 3B, is displayed and the administrator can now click on in step 190 to access the
5 "Control Panel" 300 as shown in Figure 5.

Referring now to Figure 4C, the process of generating the proprietor's web site will now described. This process is completely automated and builds the site based on the information found with the invitation document. Process 170 starts when the primary administrator logs in step 160. Next, step 174 creates the header portion 42a of the proprietor homepage 40 (Figure 4B) by accessing
10 the preliminary site information entered in step 110 by the prospective proprietor into the management file 24 (Figure 1) and, in particular, the name of the proprietor, and by finally inserting the proprietor's name into the header portion 42a. Then, step 176 creates the introduction portion 42d by accessing the invitation, which is stored in the invitation file 26 (Figure 1). A host employee creates the invitation from information supplied from the sponsor, e.g., an introductory text and/or
15 image supplied by the sponsor. Next, step 182 supplies links to the host's statements on copyright, privacy and terms of site use; these links and information are standard for the footer portions 42g of all of the proprietor homepages 40. Similar to step 178, step 184 accesses the invitation retained in the invitations file 26 and, in particular, the menus to be inserted into the portions 42b and c on the right hand side of the proprietor's homepage 40 (Figure 4B). In step 186, the site has been generated
20 and is ready to be utilized.

The proprietor homepage 40 and its portions can be modified and customized by an administrator's use of the control panel 300, as will be below with respect to Figure 5.

If the participant is a user as determined in step 150, the user is permitted to access and view a particular proprietor's web site. Note from the configuration of steps 150, 160, 170 and 180, that only
25 the administrator but not the user is permitted to create in step 170 a web site.

After the administrator has clicked in step 190 on the "Control Panel" option, the process checks in step 200 as to whether the site associated the administrator's proprietor has been registered. If not as determined in step 200, a registration form is displayed in step 240, whereby the administrator can input the appropriate registration information. Next, step 210 determines whether
30 the host's site agreement, which spells out the terms under which the proprietor may use its site, has been previously approved by the proprietor's administrator. (The administrator must complete the site registration and accept the site agreement to register users.) If step 210 determines that the agreement has not been accepted or if the administrator has elected to continue in step 250 after the site had been registered in step 240, the process displays in step 260 the host's site agreement to the administrator.
35 If as determined in step 270, the administrator declines to accept the agreement, the administrator

gains access in step 230 to the control panel 300 as shown in Figure 5. If the administrator accepts the agreement as indicated in step 270 or the step 210 indicates that the agreement was previously accepted, then the step 220 determines whether the administrator was previously given the opportunity to replace the originally given, default password and ID to identify the proprietor's site. If not, step 280 provides the administrator a form upon which the administrator can enter a new password and ID. After either step 220 determines that the administrator has been give the opportunity to change its password and ID or a new password and ID was entered in step 280 and the administrator has elected in step 290 to continue, step 230 takes the administrator to the control panel 300 as shown in Figure 5.

Referring now to Figure 4D, there is explained the use of a master template, which is stored in the template application file 26, as shown in Figure 1. The master template includes a set of operations or "tools" for constructing each web site and uploading content to its proprietor file 36 (Figure 1). These operations are originally set and may be revised by a host employee. As will be explained below, the master template is refreshed by uploading a copy thereof to one or more of the web sites, as identified by their folders 32. As shown in Figure 4D, the refreshing is triggered by any of three events 238, 242 or 244. The triggers 238 and 244 are automated, and the third trigger 242 is a manual process which is invoked by a host employee. The first automated trigger 238 occurs when an administrator of a prospective proprietor logs into the host web site 20 for the first time as detected in step 160 (Figure 4A) as explained above. This initial login effects, among numerous other actions , a proprietor file to be created in step 170 by downloading a copy of the master template retained in the host's site template file 26. In this instance, only a single proprietor site's set of operations is refreshed. In particular, step 246 causes a copy of the master template retained in the master template application file 26 to be downloaded to a particular web site and its folder 34x that has been assigned to the prospective proprietor of the administrator. The second automatic trigger is effected on a regular basis, e.g., once each evening, and refreshes the set of orders of all of the proprietor files as represented by the folders 34a -n (Figure 4A). In particular, step 250 refreshes each of the proprietor sites, as identified by their folders 34a - n. It will be appreciated that the use of the master template permits an efficient and on-going control by a host employee the operations to construct and load content to the web sites. This use of the master template allows a host employee to automate rollout of new sets of tools for use by administrators, bug fixes and other programmatic changes, to all sites on a scheduled basis without the manual intervention of a host employee. The third trigger is a manual process and is fired by a host employee requesting in step 248 a refresh of the set of operations for one in step 246 or many in step 250 of the proprietor's sites. This method allows for immediate changes, of the same type as described above, in all necessary proprietor sites.

Figure 5 is a diagram that represents the control panel 300 of each of the proprietor's site. As shown in Figure 3B, the data representative of the control panel 300, as well as the programming tools

shown in Figures 6 - 9, which is used by the administrator to compose and load content into each of the proprietor's site, is replicated for and included within each of the folders 32a - n. The control panel 300 is accessible only available to administrators (and not users). After gaining access to the control panel 300 in step 230 (Figure 4), the administrator has several choices of links for the purpose of changing or inputting content to its proprietor's site. Step 301 represents the action of clicking on one of the links. Link 300a brings the primary or associate administrator to step 310 as shown in Figure 6. Link 300b brings the administrator to step 350 as shown in Figure 6. Link 300c brings the administrator to step 390 as shown in Figure 6. Link 300d brings the administrator to step 430 as shown in Figure 7. Link 300e brings the administrator to step 580 as shown in Figure 7. Link 300f brings the administrator to step 620 as shown in Figure 8. Link 300g brings the administrator to step 730 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300h brings the administrator to step 760 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300i brings the administrator to step 790 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300j brings the administrator to step 840 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300k brings the administrator to step 880 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300l brings the administrator to step 900 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300m brings the administrator to step 920 as shown in Figure 9. Link 300n brings the administrator to step 940 as shown in Figure 9.

Figures 6 and 7 show the process by which the primary or associate administrator creates the proprietor's homepage 40 of the proprietor's web site, as shown in Figure 4B. In particular, the proprietor's homepage 40 comprises seven sections 42a - g. The portion 40a is a header and is disposed at the top of the homepage 40 and bears the company logo, name or optional slogan, as well as the control panel link 41 to facilitate access to the control panel 300 as shown in Figure 5. The portion 42d is an introduction and is disposed in the center of the homepage 40 and tells the users about the proprietor's site. The portion 42g is a footer and is disposed at the bottom of the home page 40 to present the copyright notice, link to privacy and the terms under which the user or administrator is permitted access to view the proprietor's site. The left hand side of the proprietor's homepage 40 comprises portions 42e and f, and relate to the content that the proprietor wishes to distribute to its users. The portion 42e is disposed in the upper left portion of the homepage 40 and is illustratively a menu of various topics of the proprietor's content with links to each listed topic. The proprietor's administrator may select and/or edit these topics as will be described below with respect to Figure 7 (link 4d). The portion 42f is disposed on the lower left hand side and displays a menu of links to service or product providers. The proprietor's administrator may change and/or add to these links (URLs) as will be described below with respect to Figure 4 (link 4d). In the context where the user is an employee of the proprietor/employer, the portion 42e may display various employer related topics, e.g., employer announcements, benefit and policy manuals, documents, job openings etc. In this illustrative context, portion 42f may display a menu of links to the employee benefit providers.

When the administrator clicks in step 920 on the "Site Agreement" link 300m (Figure 5), step 930 displays the site agreement that was accepted by this web site's proprietor.

When the administrator clicks on step 940 on the "Account Profile" link 300n (Figure 5), step 950 displays the account profile information, which illustratively includes contact information in terms of the address, phone and fax numbers for and the name of the proprietor and of the primary administrator.

Figure 10 is a diagram that represents the process of managing 900 carried out by the host of the server 14 or the host's employees to manage the server 14 and to exchange information with the site proprietor and the sponsors. In step 970, a host employee enters in its browser the URL address of the main or home page of the server 14 (Figure 1). Thereafter, the host employee is presented with a home page 995 of the host in the form of a menu, which shows the many links for the purpose of managing client sites. Home application file 30 (Figure 1) implements the management homepage 995; the server host or its employees communicate with the management home page 995 whereby the server 14 is managed as will be explained below.

Step 990 represents the action of clicking on one of the links. In particular, link 990a brings the host employee to step 1000 (Figure 11). Link 990b brings the host employee to step 1060 (Figure 11). Link 990c brings the host employee to step 1090 (Figure 11). Link 990d brings the host employee to step 1150 (Figure 12). Link 990e brings the host employee to step 1190 (Figure 12). Link 990f brings the host employee to step 1230 (Figure 12). Link 990g brings the host employee to step 1290 (Figure 12). Link 990h brings the host employee to step 1330 (Figure 12). Link 990i brings the host employee to step 1370 (Figure 12). Link 990j brings the host employee to step 1430 (Figure 12). Link 990k brings the host employee to step 1470 (Figure 13). Link 990l brings the host employee to step 1490 (Figure 13). Link 990m brings the host employee to step 1510 (Figure 13). Link 990n brings the host employee to step 1550 (Figure 13). Link 990o brings the host employee to step 1610 (Figure 13). Link 990p brings the host employee to step 1650 (Figure 13). Link 990q brings the host employee to step 1690 (Figure 13). Link 990r brings the host employee to step 1730 (Figure 14). Link 990s brings the host employee to step 1790 (Figure 14). Link 990t brings the host employee to step 1830 (Figure 14). Link 990u brings the host employee to step 1890 (Figure 14). Link 990v brings the host employee to step 1930 (Figure 15).

Referring now to Figure 11, when the host employee has clicked in step 1000 on the "Company Heading" link 990a of the management or host homepage 995 (Figure 10), a screen is displayed in step 1000 to facilitate a host employee to find information about the proprietors. Step 1000 provides a list of the headings or categories by which various attributes of the proprietor may be categorized or sorted. For example, attributes of the proprietor may be categorized or alphabetized. For example, the presorted categories of proprietor attributes may include: 1) a list of alphabetized

Once the host employee selects and clicks in step 1750 on the selected name of a sponsor, the host employee is taken to a form that allows the host employee to edit the menu of selected sponsor. Once the edited menu has been saved and the "Save and close" button is clicked in step 1770, the host employee is returned in step 1780 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

5 After the host employee has clicked in step 1790 to the "Create Menu" link 990s (Figure 10), a form is displayed in step 1800 that allows the host employer to create a new menu for a sponsor by inputting to that page the menu name, which is that name given by the system to both of the sponsor portions 42b and c of the proprietor homepage 40 (Figure 4B), and labels, which are the titles given to each of the respective portions 42b and c. Once the host employee has saved the new sponsor menu
10 and has clicked in step 1810 on "Save and close", the host employee is returned in step 1820 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 Once the host employee has clicked in step 1830 on the "View Menu" link 990t (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1840 with a display that lists the current menu items of the proprietor. After the host employee selects and clicks in step 1850 on a selected menu item, a form is
15 displayed in step 1860 that allows the host employee to edit the content of the selected menu items. Once the host employee saves the edited menu item and clicks in step 1870, the host employee is returned in step 1880 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 When the host employee has clicked in step 1890 on the "Create Menu Item" link 990u (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1900 with a form that allows the host employee to
20 input: 1) the name of the label, which appears as a clickable link on the right hand portions 42b and c of the proprietor homepage 40 (Figure 4B), 2) the link to which a product or service sponsor as providing for the new item for menu of a given sponsor, and 3) a numeric ranking system to define the order in which the menu items will be displayed on the proprietor homepage 40. Once the host employee has saved the new item(s) and its name, and has clicked on "Save and close" in step 1910,
25 the host employee is returned in step 1920 to the management homepage 995 (Figure 10).

 Referring now to Figure 15, when the host employee has clicked in step 1930 on the "Generate Site(s)" link 990v (Figure 10), the host employee is presented in step 1940 with a "Site Generation Creation Form" that allows the host employee to take two options. The host employee can: 1) upload a file, which contains formatted information that reserves multiple proprietor web sites,
30 or 2) reserve a single proprietor's web site by manually entering the required information. It is appreciated that the required information that must be entered includes a distinct URL for each site to be generated. The host employee selects and clicks on the desired option in step 1950. Next, step 1960 compares the URL that was assigned to each of the newly generated sites, to a stored list of URLs which have been previously assigned and are not therefor available to be assigned. If the URL
35 is found in the list and therefore is unavailable, an error message identifying the unavailable URL is

plurality of web sites, and a plurality of users of the proprietor's one web site, method comprising the steps of:

(a) programming the server to establish a hierarchy of access levels to the plurality of web sites; and

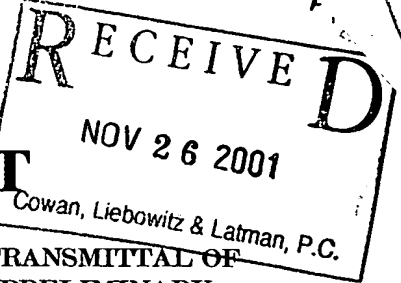
5 (b) assigning levels of access to the host, the proprietor and the users such that the host has the highest level of access, the proprietor an intermediate level of access, and the user the lowest level of access.

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

To: R. LEWIS GABLE
COWAN, LIEBOWITZ & LATMAN, P.C.
1133 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
35TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10031

PCT



NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Rule 71.1)

Date of Mailing (day/month/year) 19 NOV 2001			
Applicant's or agent's file reference 23195.01		IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION	
International application No. PCT/US00/24524	International filing date (day/month/year) 07 SEPTEMBER 2000	Priority Date (day/month/year) 07 SEPTEMBER 1999	
Applicant WORKPLUS.COM, INC.			

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international
2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translation to those Offices.

4. REMINDER

The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices)(Article 39(1))(see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide.

Name and mailing address of the IPEA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Authorized officer SALEH NAJJAR <i>James R. Matten</i> Telephone No. (703) 308-7613
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PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 23195.01	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/US00/24524	International filing date (day/month/year) 07 SEPTEMBER 2000	Priority date (day/month/year) 07 SEPTEMBER 1999
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC IPC(7): G06F 15/16 and US Cl.: 709/203, 217		
Applicant WORKPLUS.COM, INC.		

<p>1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.</p> <p>2. This REPORT consists of a total of <u>6</u> sheets.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority. (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).</p> <p>These annexes consist of a total of <u>0</u> sheets.</p>	
<p>3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:</p> <p>I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basis of the report</p> <p>II <input type="checkbox"/> Priority</p> <p>III <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-establishment of report with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability</p> <p>IV <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of unity of invention</p> <p>V <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement</p> <p>VI <input type="checkbox"/> Certain documents cited</p> <p>VII <input type="checkbox"/> Certain defects in the international application</p> <p>VIII <input type="checkbox"/> Certain observations on the international application</p>	

Date of submission of the demand 19 MARCH 2001	Date of completion of this report 30 SEPTEMBER 2001
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231	Authorized officer SALEH NAJJAR <i>James R. Matthews</i>
Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Telephone No. (703) 308-7613

I. Basis of the report**1. With regard to the elements of the international application:***☐ the international application as originally filed☒ the description:pages 1-21 , as originally filedpages NONE , filed with the demandpages NONE , filed with the letter of _____☒ the claims:pages 22-24 , as originally filedpages 25-25a , as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19pages NONE , filed with the demandpages NONE , filed with the letter of _____☒ the drawings:pages 1-18 , as originally filedpages NONE , filed with the demandpages NONE , filed with the letter of _____☒ the sequence listing part of thedescription: NONE , as originally filedpages NONE , filed with the demandpages NONE , filed with the letter of _____**2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.**

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language _____ which is:

☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).**3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international**☐ contained in the international application in printed form.☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.**4. ☒ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:**☒ the description, pages NONE☒ the claims, Nos. NONE☒ the drawings, sheets/fig NONE**5. ☐ This report has been drawn as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).¹¹**

*** Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).**

****Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.**

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US00/24524

III. Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability

1. The questions whether the claimed invention appears to be novel, to involve an inventive step (to be non obvious), or to be industrially applicable have not been and will not be examined in respect of:

☐ the entire international application.

☒ claims Nos. 12-18

because:

☐ the said international application, or the said claim Nos. _ relate to the following subject matter which does not require international preliminary examination (*specify*).

☐ the description, claims or drawings (*indicate particular elements below*) or said claims Nos. _ are so unclear that no meaningful opinion could be formed (*specify*).

☐ the claims, or said claims Nos. _ are so inadequately supported by the description that no meaningful opinion could be formed.

☒ no international search report has been established for said claims Nos. 12-18.

2. A meaningful international preliminary examination cannot be carried out due to the failure of the nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence listing to comply with the standard provided for in Annex C of the Administrative Instructions:

☐ the written form has not been furnished or does not comply with the standard.

☐ the computer readable form has not been furnished or does not comply with the standard.

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US00/24524

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**1. statement**

Novelty (N)	Claims	<u>11</u>	YES
	Claims	<u>1-10</u>	NO
Inventive Step (IS)	Claims	<u>NONE</u>	YES
	Claims	<u>1-11</u>	NO
Industrial Applicability (IA)	Claims	<u>1-11</u>	YES
	Claims	<u>NONE</u>	NO

2. citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

Claims 1-4, and 6-9 lack novelty under PCT Article 33(2) as being anticipated by Pinard et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,940,834.

Pinard teaches the invention as claimed including a automatic WEB page generator for automatic WEB page creation for an organizational directory for use in the Internet (see abstract).

As to claim 1, Pinard teaches a method of using a server to construct on an undivided memory a plurality of web sites, each web site being related to an administrator (see fig. 1; col. 3-4), said method comprising the steps of:

(a) creating a template with a set of operations that will facilitate each of said plurality of administrators to construct and input content into its related web site (see figs. 1-2; col. 4, lines 30-55, Pinard teaches that an HTML template is used for creation of WEB sites by an administrator); and

(b) responding to an administrator's logging on to the server to initiate a process of constructing a web site (see col. 4, Pinard teaches that an administrator is allowed access to a WEB page creation environment), said process including the steps of:

1. allocating a portion of the undivided memory to form a file for receiving site content (see col. 4-5, Pinard teaches that memory 130 is used for storing WEB pages), and

2. refreshing from said template said set of operations into said web site file, whereby each web site has its own set of operations to construct and input content into its file. (see col. 5, lines 15-35, Pinard teaches that an administrator populates the fields of a database entries which is automatically added and displayed on a WEB page created by a WEB page generator)

(Continued on Supplemental Sheet.)

Supplemental Box

(To be used when the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient)

Continuation of: Boxes I - VIII

Sheet 10

V. 2. REASONED STATEMENTS - CITATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS (Continued):

As to claim 2, Pinard teaches a server adapted to communicate over a network with network sites connected thereto, the network sites operating in a language adapted for transmission over the network and use by the network sites (see fig. 1; col. 4-6), said server comprising:

(a) a memory comprising a plurality of files (see fig. 1, element 130);

(b) a plurality of sites formed on said server, each of said plurality of sites comprising one of said files, said plurality of files being filled with content written in a native language other than the network adapted language; and (c) an engine for converting the native language into the network adapted language (see col. 4-5, Pinard teaches that WEB page data entries can be performed with any appropriate computer language that provides for data entry and control and storage of information into database 125 which is converted to HTML for storage into web database 130); and

(d) a controller responsive to a request from one of the network sites for the content of one of said server sites to download from said server site its content in its native language to said engine, whereby said engine converts the downloaded native language of said one server site into the network adapted language for transmission over the internet to the requesting network site (see col. 3-6, Pinard teaches that database entries 125 is converted into HTML for storage into WEB database 130, and that the WEB pages are rendered into HTML for presentation to a user).

As to claim 3, Pinard teaches a server as claimed in claim 2, wherein the network in the Internet and the network adapted language is HTML (see fig. 1-4; col. 3-5).

Claim 4 does not teach or define any new limitations above claims 1-3 and therefore is rejected for similar reasons.

As to claim 6, Pinard teaches a server adapted for communication with a plurality of administrators and a plurality of users (see fig. 1), said server comprising:

(a) a plurality of virgin sites ready to be generated and loaded with content (see col. 3-4, Pinard teaches that a HTML template is used for creating a plurality of WEB sites);

(b) a controller for receiving communications from each of the plurality of administrators and the plurality of users (see figs. 1-4; col. 4-5, Pinard teaches that WEB page generators allow administrators or users access to WEB sites);

(c) each of said plurality of web sites having a file for receiving content (see col. 4, Pinard teaches that an administrator is prompted for data entries for creation of a WEB page);

(d) said server being programmed with a set of operations for constructing and loading each of said virgin sites (see col. 4-5, Pinard teaches that WEB page generator loads the HTML template file with entries made by an administrator from application database 125); and

(e) said controller permissioning one of the plurality of administrators to access said set operations whereby the administrator can construct and load with content a related site at the discretion of the permissioned administrator, and responsive to a communication of a user to only access and view the content loaded into the user's related web site (see col. 3-4, Pinard teaches that a user may access and view the WEB page at the discretion of the administrator).

Claims 7-9 are parallel to claim 6 and therefore are rejected for similar reasons.

2. Claims 5, and 10 lack novelty under PCT Article 33(2) as being anticipated by Shane, U.S. Patent No. 5,793,972.

Shane teaches the invention as claimed including a system for providing a interactive response to recipients by

Supplemental Box

(To be used when the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient)

Continuation of: Boxes I - VIII

Sheet 11

creating personalized WEB pages based on recipient response (see abstract).

As to claim 5, Shane teaches a method of operating a server to preassign a plurality of web sites to a plurality of prospects, the server including a memory on which a plurality of web sites may be constructed (see figs. 1-2), said method comprising the steps of:

(a) developing a list of prospects for a web site (see figs. 1-4; col. 4, lines 20-30, Shane teaches that recipient database is used to develop a recipient list eligible for a WEB site);

(b) providing to each of the prospects an indication that a web site has been assigned to each prospect (see col. 3-5, Shane teaches that recipients are sent notifications indicating a WEB site assigned to the recipient);

(c) notifying said prospects that a web site has been preassigned to said prospect and that each prospect has been assigned said indication (see col. 6, Shane teaches that recipients are notified that a WEB site is assigned to them and are provided a unique login URL for admission to the WEB page);

(d) at least one prospect logging on to said server and inputting its indication thereto; and (e) the server responding to the prospect's logging onto said server and said indication to construct on the memory a web site for the prospect (see col. 7-8, Shane teaches that a recipient logs onto the site by presenting the unique URL and the server responding to the logon by the user by generating and presenting to the user a personalized WEB page).

As to claim 10, Shane teaches a method of granting access for at least one prospective proprietor to one of a plurality of web sites created on a server (see col. 6, Shane teaches that recipients are notified that a WEB site is assigned to them and are provided a unique login URL for admission to the WEB page), said method comprising the steps of:

(a) inputting a request from the one prospective proprietor to the one web site (see col. 7-8, Shane teaches that a recipient logs onto the site by presenting the unique URL and the server responding to the logon by the user by generating and presenting to the user a personalized WEB page);

(b) responding to the prospective proprietor's request to construct a web site on the server and to grant proprietor access to the one web site (see col. 7-8, Shane teaches that a recipient logs onto the site by presenting the unique URL and the server responding to the logon by the user by generating and presenting to the user a personalized WEB page);

(c) prompt the prospective proprietor to agree to use the web site; and (d) responding to the prospective proprietor's agreement to use the site by publishing the prospective proprietor's on a network (see col. 7-8, Shane teaches that access to the EB page may be done by requesting additional information from the respondent to generate the WEB page).

3. Claim 11 lacks an inventive step under PCT Article 33(3) as being obvious over Pinard.

Pinard teaches the invention substantially as claimed including a automatic WEB page generator for automatic WEB page creation for an organizational directory for use in the Internet (see abstract).

As to claim 11, Pinard teaches a method of managing the access of a number of participants to a plurality of web sites created on a server, the participants including a host of the server, a proprietor of at least one of the plurality of web sites, and a plurality of users of the proprietor's one web site (see col. 3-5, Pinard teaches that WEB page generator loads the HTML template file with entries made by an administrator from application database 125, Pinard also teaches that a user may access and view the WEB page at the discretion of the administrator), method comprising the steps of:

(a) programming the server to establish a hierarchy of access levels to the plurality of web sites; and (b) assigning levels of access to the administrator and the users (see col. 3-8, Pinard teaches that the user is given access at the discretion of the administrator and that the administrator has the higher level of access since the administrator can add or delete entries in the WEB page but the user only can view the WEB page).

Pinard does not explicitly teach the limitation wherein the host has the highest level of access. However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the